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NEW TIMES

A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

MAY 1945:
TRIUMPH OF LIFE,
HUMANITY, REASON;
A LESSON FOR TODAY'S
GENERATION
AND THOSE TO COME

OF THE
AR
MAY 16 1986
University of North Carolina
at Greensboro

LIVING TRADITION

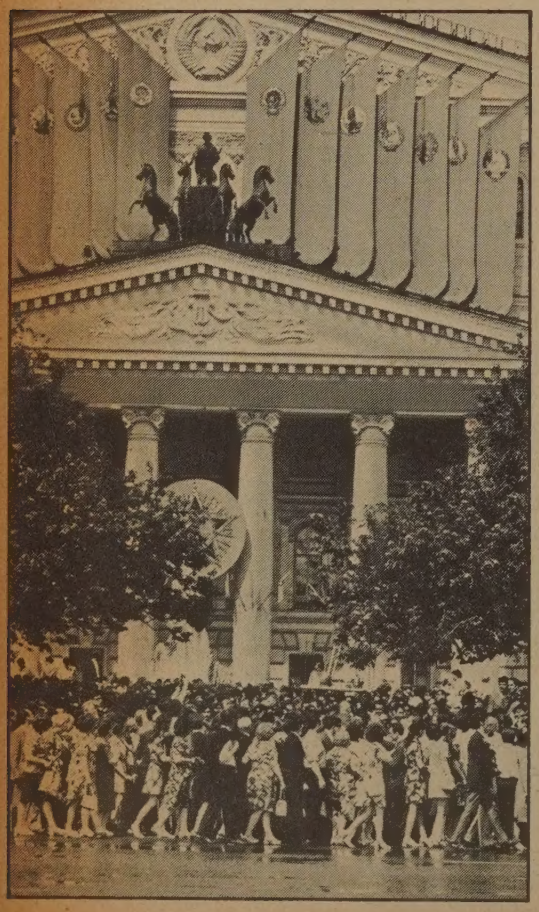
Many of the events of the past war are engraved in the memory of war veteran Yakov Yadikhanov. But one of the most memorable for him is a meeting of YCL members in Stalingrad before going into battle. "We Komsomols of the regiment vow to our country and our Leninist Party to stand firm, never to falter, and to fight the enemy to our last breath, to the last drop of our blood."

They kept their vow, both those who fell in battle defending their native land from the fascist hordes and those who pursued the enemy all the way to the frontier and, having restored the sacred boundaries of the Soviet land on their sector of the front, pushed on to liberate Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

The war ended, and the soldiers returned to their peaceful labours, to perform feats of valour, this time on the labour front.

Yadikhanov, too, returned to his native parts and to the peacetime job of driving a lorry in the grain-growing district of Kustanai. It would be well-nigh impossible to count how many truckloads of grain he transported to the elevators. Who knows but what you and I may have partaken of the bread baked from "his" flour.

Mikhail Galin, who had been awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for his part in the battles for Potsdam, became a diesel locomotive driver. In this capacity, too, he distinguished himself, as the Order of the October Revolution and the Badge of Honour he now wears testify. Two orders of the Red Banner of Labour were earned by another war veteran, Mikhail Garmanov, an excavator operator by trade, who for 12 successive seasons went out to the newly-opened grain-growing areas to help bring in the harvest.



But there are thousands of other war veterans who made invaluable contributions to the rehabilitation and development of the war-ravaged national economy. And it is not for that alone that we honour them. It is they who have brought home to the children born in that victory year of 1945, and also to their children the pain of bereavement, the bitterness of separation and the intoxicating joy of Victory they themselves experienced. It is thanks to them and not just from books and films that the youth of today know about the war and the difficulties of early postwar revival.

Every war veteran, whatever his profession or trade, and to whatever heights he has attained in his particular field, has devoted much of his time since the war to the important work of bringing up the young generation.

The Soviet War Veterans Committee has branches in many parts of the country. The branch in the town of Rudny, Kustanai Region, for instance, has 22,000 members. Among them are N. Vegerina, M. Mavrin and M. Khusainov.

"Our veterans," Yakov Dyachenko, the chairman of the Rudny branch, said, "do not feel cut off from active life even after they retire. On the contrary, we now have more time to devote to educating the youth in the patriotic spirit. Among other things, we see the new recruits off to army service and enjoin them to work hard to acquire combat skills and all the knowledge needed for modern warfare."

Those who have looked death in the face so many times are now particularly active in the fight for peace, to avert the nuclear threat hanging over humanity.

The Soviet War Veterans Committee is a member of the International Federation of Resistance Movements and of the international committees of former inmates of fascist death camps of Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, Neuengamme and Rombergpark. Its members are doing everything in their power to remove the danger to world peace.

Every year on Victory Day war veterans meet in front of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

Photos by Anatoly Garanin

THE DAY OF VICTORY

It came to remain with us forever, that long-awaited, hard-won, joyous but also tear-stained day of victory.

The obelisks standing in mute witness to the war and the suffering it brought the peoples give us no rest, and never will.

It must not happen again!

We remember how the soldiers of allied armies fought and died in Normandy. And how, meeting our fighting men on the Elbe, they with downcast eyes evaded the unspoken question: "Where were you before?"

The American soldiers did not know that their politicians were already selecting the targets for an atomic strike at the Soviet Union, or that the Hiroshima rehearsal was in the offing.

More than 40 years have passed since then. Today it is clear to both the computer-equipped expert and the man in the street that should there be another Hiroshima it would encompass the whole of the planet, the entire human race.

To put the brakes on the runaway nuclear train, Soviet diplomacy, in line with the course charted by the April Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and the 27th Party Congress, speaks directly and openly to peoples and governments of peace, of the hopes cherished by people everywhere.

Our Party bears it in mind that, like domestic policy, foreign policy is an art of the possible. We do not want to miss our chance, but we also let others have theirs. Therefore, after the eight months of our moratorium (which military experts say is a long time), we are in no hurry to resume nuclear explosions and urge that conventional armaments be scaled down.

We still do not know the full story of the war. Not all the graves of the war dead have yet been located. But it is not with blind faith, but with reverence for the memory of the fallen, with dedication to the sacred cause for which they went into battle, that we shall execute their last will and testament. We will build the radiant, spacious edifice they were not fated to enter.

We shall enter that edifice through the front door, not through devious backways. And we shall take with us the undying memory of those who did not live to see the triumph of peace in 1945.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

●

All sober-minded people in the West know how much they owe to the Soviet people, to their courage in the struggle against nazi Germany. Were it not for that feat of valour the kingdom of evil on earth would know no bounds. The victory over Hitler was a victory for truth over lies, for culture over barbarism, for reason over madness. It was a victory for history itself. And it was possible thanks to the genuine unity of the Soviet people, a unity that is one of the most important achievements of socialism. I do not share the view current in the West that it was fascist aggression that united the Soviet people. No, it merely strengthened that unity.

Hans-Karl HEINZ
Heringen, F.R.G.

●

I support and approve of the latest Soviet peace initiatives. The reply of the American side is exactly what might have been expected. The U.S. is doing everything to aggravate tension in various parts of the world, creating ever new and more dangerous seats of conflict. It intends to impose its brand of democracy on the whole world by force of arms. But who gave it the right to do so? Who gave it the right to violate the sea frontiers of the Soviet Union or to bomb Libya? If there is a country that finances and directs terrorism it is the U.S. itself.

Pierluigi DONINI
Cremona, Italy

●

I agree with your reader O. Vasilkovsky (issue No. 15) about your Monthly Review (in the Russian edition). It is not much help to me in my work as propagandist. By the time it appears in your journal the events it deals with have been reported in detail in the regular press.

V. KOVRIGIN
Sverdlovsk, U.S.S.R.

NEW TIMES

A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

НОВОЕ ВРЕМЯ · TEMPS NOUVEAUX · NOWE CZASY · TIEMPOS NUEVOS · NEUE ZEIT · nová doba · TEMPI NUOVI · TEMPOS NOVOS

18 MAY 12, 1986 Founded 1943

18 REFLECTIONS ON VICTORY DAY

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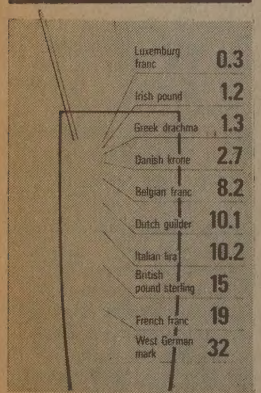


27 CURRENCY COCKTAIL

BOOMERANG OF AGGRESSION

● BENGHAZI

THE SUN-FLOODED SCHOOLYARD RESOUNDED WITH THE CHANTING OF CHILDREN. "Reagan, Reagan, cowboy Reagan, go home and leave us alone," a group of eight- and nine-year-olds shouted. "The U.S. can never bring us down," responded another group of boys and girls.

This was in Benghazi, Libya's second biggest city, situated on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Sidra 1,050 kilometres from Tripoli.

"Don't think that adults taught them that," the young literature teacher Naeema told us. "They thought it up themselves. In our country both old and young like to compose ditties on topical themes."

The school had been built ten years ago. During the U.S. night bombing of Benghazi on April 15 a bomb came down within a few metres of the main building. Luckily, it did not explode, though it destroyed a small annex as it plunged into the earth.

At dawn army engineers defused the bomb, and at the usual hour the children showed up for classes. The first- and second-grade pupils were out of luck, for several American bombs had exploded some 300 metres away and the splinters had riddled part of the façade, smashing the windows and bringing down the plaster in their two classrooms.

"When I heard the roar of planes and saw missiles explode in the vicinity of the school, I first of all thought of the children," Naeema said. "Still half asleep, I did not realize at once that it was night and the pupils were at home."

"And I thought it was an earthquake," a boy standing nearby put in. "I rushed out of the house just when two planes flashed by no more than a hundred metres above the house tops. And our anti-aircraft gunners opened up right away."

That night the U.S. planes made several raids on Benghazi, dropping bombs and missiles on residential areas. According to the local authorities, 24 civilians, among them a small child and three women, were killed, and 93 were injured.

Pentagon spokesmen claim that anything from five to twelve Libyan combat planes were destroyed at the Benina airport in Benghazi.

"That's a downright lie," deputy chief of the airport Miftah al-Fitury said. "It was not military but civilian planes that were bombed."

We saw the wreckage of two small transport planes that had been used to deliver food supplies to remote areas of the country. That night they were loaded with flour, sugar and milk powder and were to have taken off early in the morning for the southern provinces. Some distance away from the landing strip there were the burnt-out remains of an ambulance helicopter, which had been used to bring emergency medical aid to Bedouin nomads in desert areas. We also saw a Libyan airlines Boeing-727 riddled

Continued on p. 7

Editor-in-Chief: VITALY IGNATENKO
Associate Editors: L. BEZYMENSKY, V. CHERNYAVSKY, S. GOLYAKOV, Y. GUDKOV, A. PIN, B. PISHCHIK, V. TSOPPI, D. YOLSKY.
Design by A. GARANIN
Editor of English edition E. SMIRNOV

NO, NO, NO

was the U.S. answer

to all the appeals

of world opinion

to stop testing.

And on April 22

the Pentagon

carried out

another nuclear

EXPLOSION IN NEVADA

which is to be followed by more

Neither the deafening roar of missiles launched by U.S. F-111s against Libyan homes, hospitals and crêches nor the strident cries of American jingoists could drown the sinister thunder which reverberated beneath the Nevada desert on April 22. By the Pentagon's yardstick, it was a tiny explosion, a "mere" 20-150 kilotons. Following the practice of "baptizing" nuclear "dwarfs" at that lethal site, the blast was called Jefferson, after the third U.S. President.

Recently, the 40th U.S. President, sitting comfortably in the Oval Office of the White House, told compatriots and anyone else who cared to listen: "My highest duty as President [is] to preserve peace and defend these United States." But how was he to do it? "To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving the peace."

If anyone disagreed, the President had a very convincing argument: "I've never seen anyone insult Jack Dempsey." He was referring to the ex-world heavyweight champion, whose punch was as strong as a kick from a horse.

"And strength is the most persuasive argument we have to convince our adversaries to give up their hostile intentions, to negotiate seriously and to stop bullying other nations," the President warmed to his theme. "In the real world, peace through strength must be our motto."

Of course, everyone is free to cite examples and arguments he considers pertinent. But the real world is not a cowboy ranch or a boxing ring in which a strong fist decides everything. No one will survive the nuclear knockout, not hard-hitting Jack Dempsey, not his adversary, not the spectators, whatever "boxing gloves" are being tested in Nevada. According to the latest public opinion polls, 80 per cent of Americans are aware of this: they think explosions should be halted at least till the next Soviet-American summit.

As for the U.S. Administration, it sometimes talks as if it were in favour of hanging up the gloves. Ronald Reagan explained his view of things as follows: "We want to reduce arms.... We want real agreements—agreements that really work—with no cheating."

Wonderful words! But when the Soviet Union came up with a concrete and realistic plan for the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals by the end of the present century, two nuclear explosions, one after another, were detonated in Nevada in response—and there are more to come, they say.

Nor has "peace-loving" Washington responded to the latest Soviet initiatives, put forward at the congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in Berlin, on reductions in armed forces and armaments in Europe, a region where the risk of nuclear war is especially high....

Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said that for civilization to survive, we should cultivate the science of human relationships, the ability of all nations, even very different ones, to live together in peace on this earth of ours. These words are very relevant today.

A BAN DOESN'T SUIT WASHINGTON'S BOOK

Mankind is faced with a choice between two alternatives: material preparation for a nuclear apocalypse or a search for a mutually acceptable agreement. Responsibility or irresponsibility. A year ago Moscow again urged Washington to give serious thought to these alternatives. And it soon confirmed its own choice with concrete action.

1985. JULY. The U.S.S.R. unilaterally announces a moratorium on all nuclear tests as of August 6 until January 1, 1986, and calls upon the U.S. to do likewise.

"Where is your courage, Mr President?" This question is put to a hesitating Ronald Reagan by American peace supporters. He only has courage enough to invite a Soviet observer to watch the nuclear test in Nevada. The Russians are not to be trusted, Assistant Secretary of Defence Richard Perle warns.

1985. NOVEMBER. The leaders of the two countries meet in Geneva. The U.S.S.R. raises the question of the complete prohibition for all time of nuclear weapon tests under effective control.

White House Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes: The Russians have the advantage, and at the given moment they do not need to conduct tests.

THE PURPOSE OF TESTS: NEW WEAPONS

My collocutor was Frank Blackaby, a grey-haired Briton with a slow deliberate manner who is currently director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

I had only one question: how did the institute explain Washington's stand, namely its refusal not only to join the Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing but even to hold talks on the issue? All previous American presidents since Dwight Eisenhower have advocated a total nuclear test ban.

Blackaby told me that tests have two objectives. One is to check the reliability of existing nuclear weapons. Doubts about reliability are good because if the sides are unsure of their nuclear weapons they are less tempted to use them. At the same time quite a few experts claim that reliability can be checked without tests. The other, far more important, objective is to test new nuclear devices. This is exactly what is being done as new types of weapons are developed. The current Administration, which has stated its complete lack of interest in a total ban on nuclear testing, has undoubtedly departed from the previous official position. Since 1980 it has been implementing a rearmament programme and its foreign policy has become increasingly adventurist.

There is indeed a direct relationship between nuclear tests and the appearance of new weapons. Washington Post correspondent Walter Pincus recently cited a long list of nuclear weapons which are now being developed or produced. According to him, the Pentagon and the Energy Department (concerned with the development of nuclear weapons) "are seeking funds for laboratory experiments and underground tests to study new types of nuclear warheads and missiles for the next decade that could destroy hardened Soviet missile silos or black out Moscow's electronic equipment."

The laboratories producing advanced weapons, in particular those at Livermore and Los Alamos, are fiercely resisting any attempt to stop tests. It is those laboratories that churn out not only weapons but also arguments intended to justify the nuclear arms buildup. One such argument has been employed since 1958: it is possible to violate a test ban treaty by conducting explosions in underground caves, which makes the problem of verification insoluble.

No one of the four specialists I talked to at the Stockholm institute doubted the existing verification potential. Frank Blackaby gave me copies of two reports, one by the American geology professor Linn Syks and the other by Jarry Legget of the London Department of Geology. They adduced scientific arguments to prove that it is impossible to conduct explosions secretly even with yields of under one kiloton each. Seismic and radar equipment can distinguish between nuclear tests and, say, volcanic eruptions.

The other line of argument—the need to check the reliability of existing nuclear arms—sounds less and less convincing.

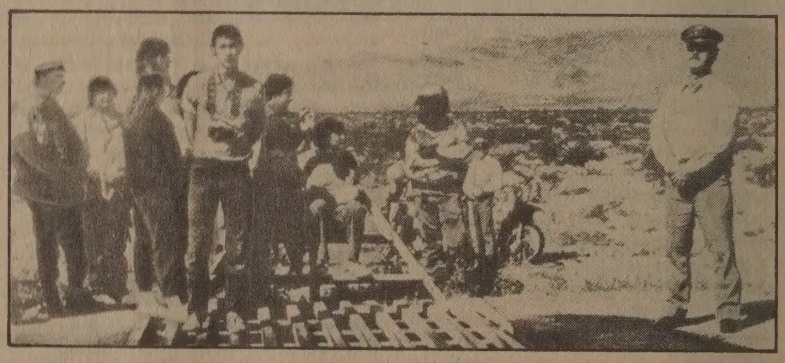
Glenn Seaborg, a Nobel Prize winning chemist who took part in the verification of nuclear tests for 10 years as chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, believes that nuclear weapons can be maintained in perfect condition by checks and the replacement of faulty parts. His view is shared by a Nobel Prize winner in physics, Hans Bethe, and many other scientists.

The only purpose of testing therefore is the development of new weapons. Explosions in Nevada are telling the world that the current U.S. Administration is going to carry on the arms race.

One question here is whether or not new weapons are needed to ensure U.S. national security, Frank Blackaby says. More and more specialists tend to believe that no new weapons are needed and that those which are already in existence are enough.

Frank Blackaby thinks the nuclear arms arsenals could be halved without prejudice to the security of either side. Another staff member at the institute, Allan Tin of Denmark, who concerns himself exclusively with the problem of tests, says that tests must be stopped

Arrest of demonstrators at a testing ground.
Photo from L' Humanité (France)



1985. DECEMBER. The U.S.S.R. declares its readiness to prolong the moratorium beyond January 1 if Washington reciprocates.

Pentagon chief Caspar Weinberger: The U.S.S.R. never conducts tests at this time of the year.

Another nuclear device is exploded in the U.S.

1986. JANUARY. The U.S.S.R. prolongs its moratorium for another three months. Moscow announces its support for the idea of an international system to verify observance of a moratorium and declares that agreement on effective measures of on-the-spot verification is possible.

Caspar Weinberger: The Soviet proposal is unacceptable.

1986. MARCH. The U.S.S.R.: The moratorium remains in force until the first nuclear explosion in the U.S. after March 31. Mikhail Gorbachev proposes an immediate summit meeting to agree on ending nuclear tests.

The White House says No!

George Miller, of the U.S. Energy Department: "Nuclear testing is necessary for the morale of young weapons designers who would quit if there were a moratorium."

Larry Speakes: A test ban is not in the interests of the U.S. and its allies.

Another nuclear test in Nevada.

1986. APRIL. The U.S.S.R. calls on Washington to heed the voice of reason, humanity and of the Americans themselves, the majority of whom are for an end to testing.

Another explosion in Nevada.

above all to prevent the development of new weapons. His conclusion is that the view that the development of nuclear weapons can be halted was abandoned in the U.S.A. after the current Administration came to power.

Indeed, the doctrine of "mutual deterrence" or "mutually assured destruction," drawn up in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was based on the presumption that national security rested on the mutual vulnerability of both sides in a nuclear conflict. Whether the authors of that doctrine liked it or not, it ruled out the possibility of the use of strategic nuclear weapons because of the danger of universal annihilation.

One unexpected but logical consequence of the doctrine was growing doubt as to the expediency of the further accumulation of nuclear weapons, of which there are more than enough today for multiple overkill. The view has become widespread that it is high time to put an end to the arms race.

How can all these views be reconciled with the programme of nuclear modernization, the development of new types of ever deadlier weapons? But no attempt is being made to reconcile them. Washington is openly claiming that it will not conduct talks on the total banning of nuclear tests for as long as the United States relies on nuclear weapons—and is beginning to advocate another, as yet unspecified doctrine, which envisages the achievement of decisive superiority over the Soviet Union. It is banking on the Strategic Defence Initiative. This means in practice not only refusal to end nuclear tests. The entire process of arms control is being put in jeopardy.

That is why special importance is attached to the recent Soviet initiatives on the termination of nuclear tests. The research work "Arms in the '80s," recently put out by SIPRI, points out that ending the development and testing of new weapon systems is the only and most efficient way of terminating the arms race and the first essential step towards disarmament.

"Naturally, what has been achieved in arms control is better than nothing," I was told by Doctor Bhupendra Jasani, who studies the problems of space weapons at the institute. "However, I have the impression that we are always late. In 1963, when the treaty on banning nuclear tests in the three media was signed, we hoped—and had promises to that effect—that the talks would be continued. If the nuclear tests had been stopped completely, five years after that there would have been no weapons such as exist today."

Jasani's scepticism is easy to understand: since 1963, according to the New York Times, there have appeared 28 new types of nuclear warheads.

A SOVIET EXPERT OPINION

Academician MIKHAIL SADOVSKY, director of the Institute of Geophysics, was interviewed on the telephone by our correspondent.

Q.: What would you say about the claim that a nuclear test can be concealed and passed off as an earth tremor or a volcanic eruption?

A.: It is absolute nonsense. To conceal such an explosion, one must first of all be able to predict earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, which fortunately are quite rare and far apart. Moreover, such tests would have to be conducted in seismic areas or close to active volcanoes. This is quite unrealistic.

Q.: What means of monitoring nuclear tests are available today?

A.: There are numerous ways of doing this. They have been thoroughly tested and are quite reliable. Dozens of works have been written on the subject. In short, present-day seismic methods fully guarantee the detection of nuclear explosions. There are hundreds of seismic stations—Soviet, American, Swedish, Norwegian, Indian and others—to do the job.

Q.: But what guarantee is there that what they detect is a nuclear explosion and not an underground natural cataclysm?

A.: Such questions were being asked 30 years ago.

Q.: Yet they continue to be asked in the West today....

A.: Well, questions can be asked indefinitely, of course.

I have grown old tackling this problem. I can only say that if one side does not want agreements, its talk about dependability of verification and possibilities of concealing explosions is a cover for its unwillingness to stop nuclear testing.

COMMENT FROM LOS ALAMOS

"Laser every day keeps Russians away." One of our correspondents spotted this slogan at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. Thus crudely are scientists reminded of the purpose of their research.

The Department of Energy has earmarked five projects for the mandarins of American science this year. They are all concerned with third-generation weapons (the first two generations being the atomic and hydrogen bombs): x-ray and optical lasers, ultra-high speed projectiles, microwave and beam weaponry.

Here are the comments of John Jay Hopkins and Robert W. Selden, two scientists from the Los Alamos laboratory which is developing, in the context of Reagan's "star wars," new weapons meant to propel matter at high speed or to channel nuclear explosions into tight beams of radiation that flash across space.

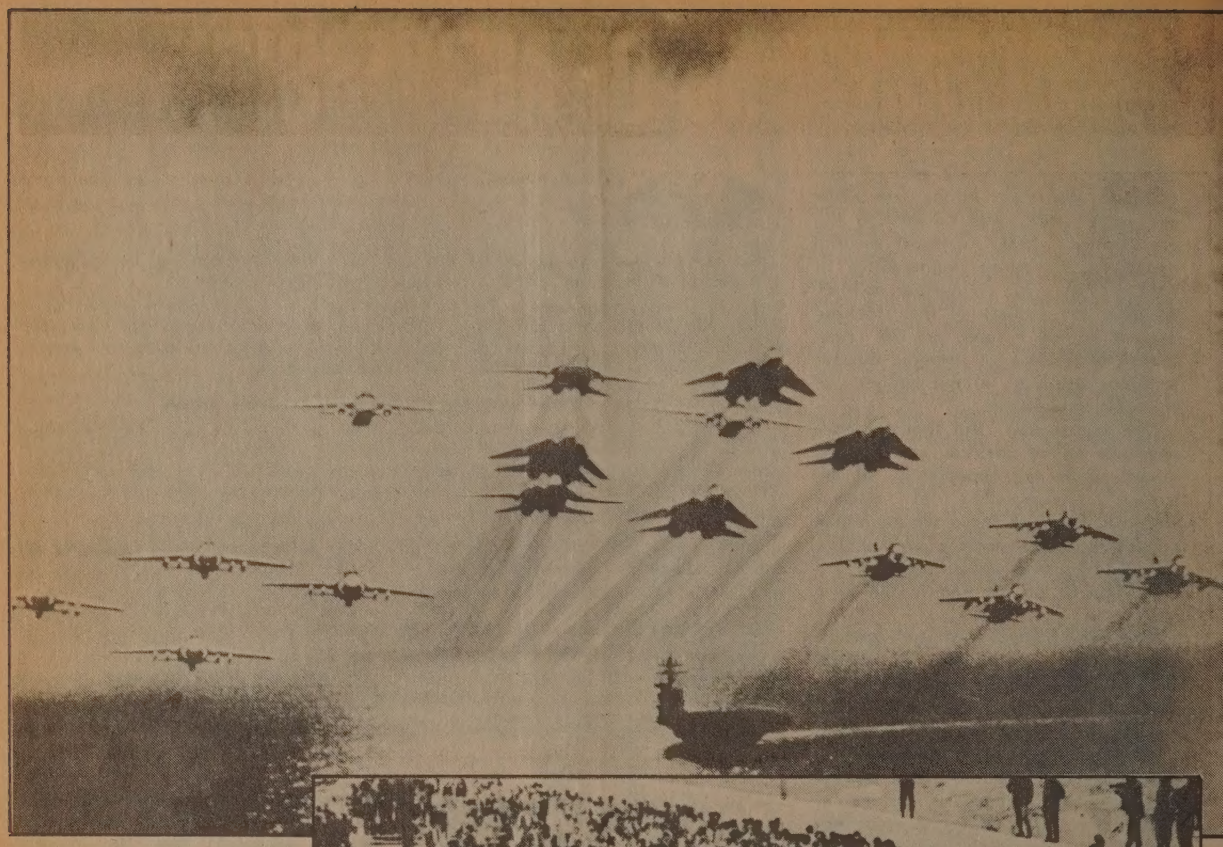
COMMENT No. 1. Third-generation weapon tests are top secret. Hence one can only presume that they started in 1980. For the time being 15 explosions are announced every year. A certain number of explosions are conducted without announcement. All three generations of weapons are tested simultaneously. Traditional nuclear weapon programmes will continue until the U.S. no longer has to rely on the nuclear deterrent. The development of new systems is of an extremely long-term nature.

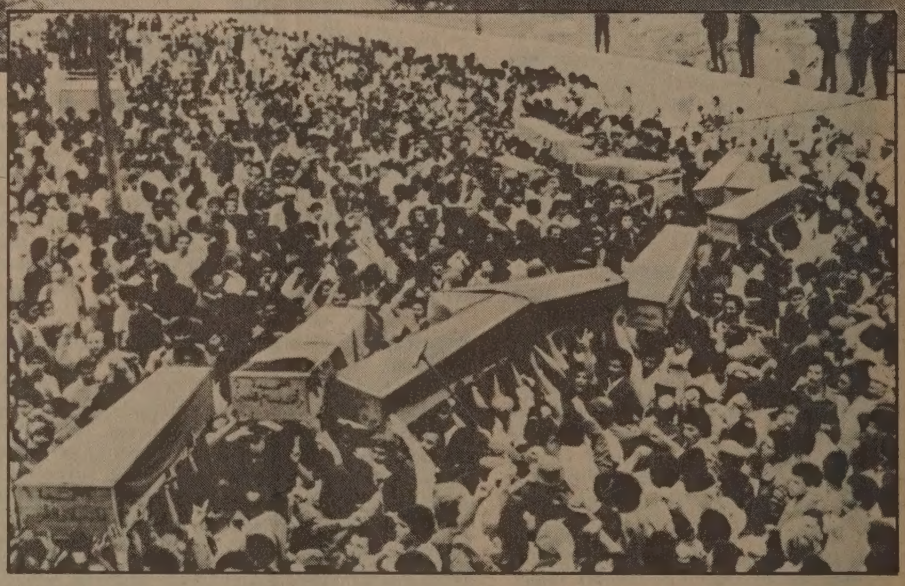
COMMENT No. 2. At least 100 to 200 test explosions will be necessary, as the physical processes scientists are currently handling are far more complex than any studied before.

COMMENTING ON THE COMMENTS, Dr Thomas Cochran, coauthor of the "Nuclear Weapons Data Book," and John E. Pike, a military expert of the Federation of American Scientists, say that the views expressed by their Los Alamos colleagues are tantamount to admitting that the development of third-generation weaponry is virtually out of the question, as there is still a very long way to go. Today already each nuclear test costs anywhere from $10 million to $30 million, depending on its complexity. One can easily imagine how much continued work on the new systems will cost.

So why "laser every day" when the Russians are proposing to "keep tests away"?

Contributions by
L. MAKAREVICH, G. SIDOROVA,
N. ZHOLKVER (Moscow),
Y. GUDKOV (Stockholm)





America is in high spirits after its "victory." It is cocking a snook at the world. A new and happy life has begun. The Vietnam syndrome is over. Muscles are being flexed. Again anything goes.

U.S. aircraft have bombed the homes of others on another nation's coast. The Hand of God punishes all who do not believe there is no god but America, an almighty, ubiquitous god from whom one cannot hide on earth, in the sea, the sky, or in space. So humble yourself, especially if you are not an American, or else....

Do not pray to America for mercy. It will not hear. Do not invoke its conscience. It will not respond. "We can expand the limits of our conscience when it proves too constricting," Tartuffe said. Washington has said, through its Secretary of State, that it has carried out a most impressive operation which has aroused respect for the United States....

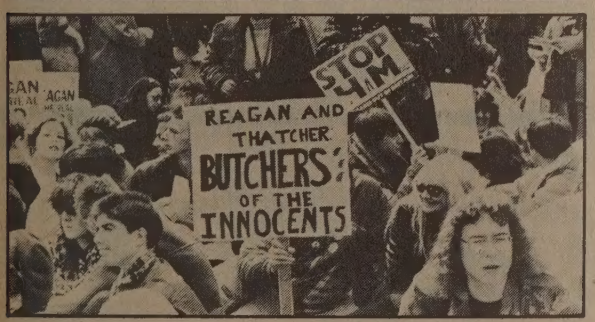
A procession of coffins carried over the heads of Libyans, who curse and despise the America that shattered the peaceful silence of the Tripoli and Benghazi night and killed little boys and girls....

Placards which condemn the man who ordered the shedding of Libyan blood....

With a bomb in its hand, the Statue of Liberty comes to life on a street in Bonn. Its message is: Be on your guard—neoglobalism!

"It is painful yet welcome that by his folly with regard to Libya Reagan has shaken the foundations of the Western alliance," Stern ex-

BOOMERANG OF AGGRESSION



claims. "There is no point," it adds, "in continuing to pretend that those famous 'shared values,' invoked in calls for cohesion in NATO, exist...."

Britons want to know why, and for what "shared values" their proud country has been forced to act against its will as an accomplice to murder....

Imperialist America is in high spirits, cocking a snook at the world. It has left its conscience behind.

(Continued from p. 2)

with shell fragments. By a miracle the flyers on board had not suffered.

Widespread damage was done in Benghazi itself, all of it in residential districts remote from military installations of any kind.

We were invited to see a rehabilitation centre for invalids.

"Ours is a humane mission: we treat the sick and return to people deformed at birth their faith in life and enable them to do useful work," Ibrahim Djaar, the director of the centre, said. "We have more than 100 cripples, most of them able to move about only in wheelchairs. They work in carpentry or machine shops, or are bookbinders."

The centre has on display leather bags and purses, shoes, and wooden souvenirs made by the patients. Next to these is another "exhibition": dozens of bomb fragments and components of cluster and pellet bombs of the type the Israeli Zionists used during their aggression against Lebanon in 1982.

The staff of the rehabilitation centre includes doctors from Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and other Arab countries. A missile hit a one-storey house occupied by a Polish neuropathologist, but by lucky chance nobody was injured.

At the ruins of a number of houses in the Tarik al-Matar district a British BBC television correspondent had climbed onto the remains of a concrete wall for an on-the-spot reportage.

"American bombs exploded here," she was saying. "One Libyan was killed. I have just talked with his severely injured wife at the hospital. This is a residential area. There is not a single military installation here. It is difficult to understand what the American flyers were aiming at...."

Across the street were a dozen newly-built bluish-white three-storey buildings which had not yet been opened for occupancy. The windows were smashed and the housewalls had been scarred by bomb fragments.

An hour's drive out of Benghazi brought us to a spot on the shore of the Gulf of Sidra where Libyan army engineers had brought dozens of unexploded cluster bombs they had found and defused in the city. The bombs lay there, their white sides gleaming, like so many beached sharks. The English inscriptions on them indicated they were intended for use with A-6 and A-7 planes, the types of planes that took off from the U.S. aircraft carriers Coral Sea and America to attack Benghazi. There were also anti-personnel bombs capable each of spewing out 250 small bombs filled with metal pellets.

"The night attack did not come as a surprise to us," a Libyan officer said. "For a long time now carrier-based U.S. aircraft have been making provocative flights, heading full speed for our territorial waters to return where they came from. But on this fatal night the U.S. flyers had orders to empty their lethal loads on Libya."

Driving along the coastal highway, newsmen could see from their bus windows undamaged Libyan air defence missile and radar installations.

Before their brigand raids on Tripoli and Benghazi, the American flyers were 100 per cent sure that they would not miss the targets selected for them in advance. The operation was thoroughly prepared. However, newsmen who viewed the results of the

POISON OF CHAUVINISM IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

Behind the Anti-Libyan Psychological War

Read carefully all that Washington politicians have said since the barbarous raid on Libya, all that has been written about it in the press. You will see that the justification for this action "to combat terrorism" was a figment of the imagination. As we now learn, the U.S. leaders did not even believe the raid would resolve the problem. No less crude was the pretext, the explosion in a West Berlin discotheque. According to the Washington Post, joint bombing strikes by the U.S. navy and air force had been planned for months. White House analysts are not so shortsighted as to have failed to foresee that the U.S. bombs that shattered Tripoli's residential districts would trigger off a worldwide explosion of anger and indignation. This, however, did not prevent them perpetrating their act of aggression, behind the shibboleth of "self-defence," thus risking what little was left of their foreign policy credibility.

The raid was of paramount significance for Washington. It was not just at streets in the Libyan capital that lasers aimed the lethal bombs. The target was also the Americans themselves, or rather their Achilles' heel, their hypertrophied nationalism, which breeds bellicose chauvinism. In the war of nerves against Libya and in their efforts to stretch American nerves to the limit by looking for terrorists under their own beds Washington politicians also point the finger at Iran and Nicaragua, alleging that they too are sources from which the danger to the U.S. emanates. And they continue, of course, to re-orchestrate old anti-Soviet numbers as well.

But what do Washington's present-day ideologists fear most? Not, one imagines, "Libyan terrorists" and, the more so, "the Soviet threat" or even Soviet missiles. What they fear most are the ordinary Americans displaying outside government offices hand-written placards reading "Russians stopped testing. Why don't we?" The unilateral Soviet moratorium on all nuclear explosions proclaimed last August was not just an appeal. It was implemented. As awareness of this grew, the "why?" rang out more and more distinctly and more and more often from both ordinary individuals and politicians. The White House's apprehension increased when last January the Soviet Union set out its programme to deliver the world from nuclear arms by the start of the next millennium. After all, the year 2000 is not far off. Meanwhile the number of placards at demonstrations and rallies and outside the barbed wire of army proving grounds is growing by leaps and bounds. It has become clear even to the uninitiated, as The Nation weekly notes, that "in the darkest cellars of the White House, they seem more worried about Moscow's pacifism than about its militarism. Gorbachev's sweeping disarmament proposal, perhaps the most comprehensive plan of its kind from a superpower since the end of World War II, has thrown policy makers into embarrassed confusion. Reasonable people might conclude that it is more profitable to base policy on real compromise than imagined threats."

The thousand billion dollars already "invested" in U.S. militarization and the billions more wrung out of the taxpayer for "star wars," have been called into question. ("All these weapons come to much more than is needed even for the firmest defence," the head of a major Wall Street firm told me. "This is more than the economy can take.") The carefully nursed spirit of militarism, the lovingly tended shoots of jingoism sown amongst the younger generation by the "glorious victory" in Grenada were in jeopardy.

The situation had to be urgently rectified. That blood best nurtures chauvinism is common knowledge. As the London Guardian notes, in U.S. eyes there are three types of human blood: U.S. citizens' blood, which has a supreme and sacred value; allied blood, which "rises and falls according to the state of the diplomatic game"; and "commie and wog blood," which "has so low a value it does not even have a quotation on the Wall Street exchange." Consequently, when a month ago the "threat to Texas from Nicaragua" was invented to incite military hysteria and the decision taken to give the contras a $100-million handout "for liberation purposes," someone realized that the mercenaries would be knocked out and "first-category blood" shed if America became embroiled in the adventure. Possibly this was why they so rapidly switched to the provocation off Libyan shores. The White House evidently calculating that this would involve the expense of little (for which, read alien) blood but would still ensure a "Grenada effect."

Barely six months have elapsed since the Soviet and American leaders signed the joint statement on the need to improve bilateral relations and ameliorate the international situation generally. And now suddenly Washington behaves in a way that is quite incompatible with every single point in the accords. Why is Reagan, so recently praised by the U.S. media for having restrained himself on the eve of the summit from vilifying the Soviet Union, again making his all-too-familiar remarks to the effect that the U.S.S.R. is the greatest threat to peace since time began and that he in no way regrets having labelled it an "evil empire"? Why has the White House done this at a time when, as a Republican acquaintance of mine observed the other

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bombing could see for themselves that neither the F-111 fighter-bombers that took off from British airfields nor the carrier-based A-6 and A-7 planes hit the pre-set targets.

The Pentagon planners expected that the 18 F-111s could wreck the pre-set targets in Libya with one strike and that their own losses would be negligible.

But this was a miscalculation. According to American standards, losses in such operations should not exceed 3-4 per cent of the attack force. Actually, however, one F-111 was shot down and another damaged seriously enough to force it to land at a U.S. base in Spain, which made the losses more than double the norm. And if the several seriously damaged carrier-based planes are taken into account, the percentage of losses was even higher.

The laser- and self-guided bombs proved powerless against the barrage laid by the Libyan ground-to-air missile launchers. The heavy fire forced the U.S. flyers think more of saving themselves than of carrying out their assignments.

The U.S. "victory" thus proved nebulous indeed. The bandit action was designed to terrorize its victims, but it failed of its purpose. It did not terrorize anyone, not even the children. It only evoked anger and contempt.

● LONDON

AN INCONSPICUOUS YOUNG WOMAN WITH A TRAVELLING BAG BOARDED A BOEING-747 ON A LONDON—TEL AVIV FLIGHT. Security had been tightened at Heathrow airport following the U.S. raid on Libya because of fears of "indiscriminate reprisals," as Margaret Thatcher put it.

The passengers and their luggage were thoroughly checked and X-rayed, but neither the young woman nor her hand luggage aroused suspicion. She was complete-

day, businessmen are giving increasing thought to economic cooperation with the Soviet Union?

However, it is not these sane though conservative Americans who determine political priorities. The reins of power are in the hands of wealthy investors for whom civilian commodities are a sideline, as their real profits derive from everything associated with war.

These are the people who need ideological props. To infect the nation with war hysteria is not enough. It has to be exploited to grind the Establishment axe. And this is being done. Look how the Wall Street Journal is now censuring legislators after the attack on Libya and the concomitant anti-Libyan war of nerves. It terms Representative Patricia Schroeder's proposed ban on nuclear testing and Senator Edward Kennedy's companion bill "a form of unilateral disarmament." How easy it is, we see, to put the cart before the horse and fly in the face of common sense. All those reluctant to take account of common sense will soon have support from the media. The highlight of ABC TV's new season will be an "atonement" for its truthful film of some years ago "The Day After" which shows the consequences of nuclear war. The new serial is set in the U.S. after it has meekly surrendered to the "Soviets" thanks to "liberals" who sold America down the river by condemning the nuclear arms race and the military-industrial complex.

As we can see, anti-Sovietism is the basic leverage being used to nurture chauvinism. It is admitted in Washington today that any conflict with the U.S.S.R. will inevitably develop into a nuclear exchange. For an ordinary duty officer to be prepared unhesitatingly to push the nuclear button, he must be able to visualize a "spawn of Satan" which he would have no compunction in killing, a morose and vicious stereotype of backwardness and deceit without any conception of freedom.

To demonstrate that "Reds" are inhuman, the fairytale is concocted that "good Americans" supposedly warned of the explosion that was to shatter the West Berlin discotheque but the bloodthirsty Russians did nothing to thwart the terrorists. However, no one asked why, if they knew about everything in advance, they did not warn their own people. That would have been bad form.

It is good form, however, to foment fear in the heart of the average American by crying wolf about repeated Soviet "violations" of treaties and agreements and its military superiority. I cannot say how many times in my eighteen months in New York I have seen the Krasnoyarsk-Radar combination on the front pages of newspapers. It would be hard to imagine how many different military functions, outside the context of Soviet-American treaties, have been ascribed to the radar station which is being built in the neighbourhood of the Siberian city to track objects in space, and all this with allusions to "reliable" sources. However, we learn that in 1984 a CIA report, which had been coordinated with other intelligence services, definitely informed the U.S. leadership that the Krasnoyarsk station's design did not allow it to be used as radar for the direction of military operations.

Plentiful instances of this nature could be cited. Only recently, at a public Congressional hearing, a Pentagon VIP vowed that it would take decades of fast financing to catch up with the Soviet Union in space weaponry. But a fortnight later another Pentagon official categorically rejected the notion of Soviet superiority in space weaponry. The only difference was that the second official was testifying at a secret meeting of a Congressional Committee.

In fulfilling their social order, the "independent" media echo the official propaganda line. Caricatures of Soviet leaders are seen as effective ways of promoting various beverages. The dignity of a whole nation is slighted day after day. Youngsters pay five dollars to see a film in which the "regular American guy" Rocky punches in the boxing ring a callous "Red" brute. Small wonder that, describing a U.S. heavyweight girding himself for a comradely bout with a Soviet boxer, the TV commentator said: "Now Rocky's going to Russia." Or that only one in three Americans will take it upon themselves to say that Soviet parents also love their children.

"Most school students think the raid on Libya justified," says a high school principal in Watertown, Connecticut.

"Social sciences instructors were better prepared for this attack than for Grenada," is the view shared by the teaching staff at a school in Canarsie, New York.

Jingoism has come home to roost. Vietnam? It's a thing of the past.

How many more of the President's young compatriots share his view that might is right, that the strong can act with impunity?

How many of them have concluded that it will be like that always?

This is an extremely dangerous conclusion to draw in this nuclear age!

A. ARKHIPOV
Our Own Correspondent

New York

A street in Tripoli after the raid.

TASS photo

ly calm. But how was she to know what a lethal surprise her boyfriend had planted in her double-bottomed travelling bag as he helped her pack? They had known each other for about a year and were expecting a baby. They planned to take a holiday together and the boyfriend took her to the airport and promised to follow her to Israel on the next flight. He knew, however, that they were parting forever.

One hour after takeoff, the bomb went off and the huge Boeing plunged downwards, killing almost 400 passengers and crew in a burst of flame.

This story is almost entirely true: the woman and her boyfriend, a young fanatic who had come to Britain about a year previously, really existed. There was a plane and a bomb. The catastrophe was avoided, however: the last check at the ramp miraculously discovered the bomb and the alarm signal was flashed. The woman was detained and the bomb defused. A hunt was mounted for the boyfriend, who had fled. The plane reached its destination safely.

A happy ending, just like Hollywood? Not quite. It was the possible U.S. reaction to that act of terrorism, if it had succeeded, that troubled local observers. They think that if the plane had been blasted out of the skies, an even worse bloodbath could have followed. The recent raid on Libya demonstrated that Washington intends to arrogate to itself the exclusive right to punish terrorists, real and imaginary, in total disregard of commonly accepted norms of conduct in international affairs, and even of the opinion of its allies. Ronald Reagan said after the barbarous raid of Libyan cities:

"If necessary, we shall do it again." But what can this escalation of violence lead to and where will our world, fragile and shaky as it is, find itself? the local press asks.

The British public was impressed by a passage in Eduard Shevardnadze's report at a recent meeting in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses: "Just imagine what will happen if states, responding to acts of terrorism by individuals or groups, practise acts of armed aggression against other states they accuse of terrorism. The peace and security of the peoples not only of the regions concerned but of the whole world would be jeopardized."

Moscow's warning is timely. Of course, terrorism must be countered—but not by the methods used by the terrorists themselves, let alone by terrorism institutionalized as official policy. We must fight terrorism, the well-known American public figure, Jesse Jackson, has said. But the U.S. government is financing terrorism in Angola, doing business with those who have made it law in South Africa, practising terror itself by planting mines in harbours in Central America, and will not stop supporting it in South Korea and Chile. When, after all this, the President condemns terrorism in the Middle East, Jackson continued, no one in the world believes him as he has no moral right to such a posture.

It is common knowledge that most of the covert operations of the American secret services and other imperialist intelligence networks involve the use of the worst methods of terrorists, like the assassinations of Patrice Lumumba and Salvador Allende and plans to kill Fidel Castro and certain other political leaders who are not to Washington's liking. The air raids on Tripoli and Benghazi were intended, incidentally, to kill the leader of the Libyan revolution, Muammar Gaddafi.

"I have not the slightest doubt that Gaddafi could produce as much 'proof' of CIA terrorism as Reagan could produce of Libyan terrorism," a reader from Northwood wrote in a letter to the London Standard. Many Britons I talked to in recent days are convinced that today's political terrorism is one of the most revolting offshoots of the unfair social system rooted in exploitation and violence. The best way to fight that evil is to achieve an overall improvement in the international climate on a fair, democratic basis. But Washington refuses to accept this. "What is clear tonight is that the United States will take military action under certain circumstances," Secretary of State George Shultz declared after the bombing raid on the Libyan cities. "That's established. That's very important."

Naturally, the world community should be informed of Washington's intentions. But the decision announced by George Shultz is anything but encouraging.

● BONN

THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT LEARNED OF THE U.S. RAID ON LIBYA ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 14 FROM NEWS AGENCY REPORTS. Chancellor Kohl was sleeping at the time of the attack and his deputy, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, was on his way to Washington to try, following the decision of the EEC foreign ministers who had met in The Hague the day before, to talk the Reagan Administration out of armed action against Libya.

Meanwhile, the raid was being planned in the Federal Republic, at the Stuttgart headquarters of the U.S. forces in Europe. The headquarters also directly controlled the entire operation. Small wonder that the U.S. 56th Field Artillery Brigade, armed with Pershing 2 nuclear missiles, started exercises on April 15. The U.S. air force bases in Frankfort on the Main and Ramstein were put on alert. The Americans seemed to be preparing themselves in case their act of aggression escalated into a wider armed conflict.

And what did the Chancellor do after his country had been put without his knowledge on the brink of involvement in a venture with unforeseeable consequences? The day after the bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi he called a press conference and inveighed against Libya, the victim of the aggression. The government statement Kohl made in the Bundestag on April 16 did not denounce Washington's criminal action either but merely remarked that "in the long term, the hydra of terrorism cannot be

NEOGLOBALISM, MIDDLE EAST VERSION

Washington continues to threaten Libya. It is imploring the allies to strengthen Atlantic solidarity while envisaging the possibility of joint military action being taken against Libya in the long term.

But will it stop with Libya! Having acquired a taste for neoglobalism, Washington cries "Terrorism!" whenever it gets the itch to pull the trigger.

And are the methods of "neoglobalism" all that new! A look into the past may give us a better idea of their evolution and scale, and the dubious prospects they hold out for the future.

1956. The Suez crisis was provoked, with the direct involvement of the U.S., on the pretext of ensuring "freedom of navigation." As a result, navigation was paralyzed for a long time not only in the Suez Canal but throughout the Mediterranean. Eisenhower sent his emissary to London with instructions to get the West to take joint action against Nasser. State Secretary Dulles made it clear (as Reagan does today) that the U.S. did not rule out the use of force. The U.S. Sixth Fleet was sent into Egyptian territorial waters on the pretext of "protecting the lives and property of American citizens" (the same reason given for Washington's later armed intervention in the Middle East and Grenada). Washington took no direct part in Operation Musketeer—the code name for the aggression against Egypt by the triple alliance of Britain, France and Israel in which the Suez crisis resulted. It preferred to act merely as a coordinator. It even tried to explain the landing of U.S. Marines in Alexandria as an attempt to "oppose" the invasion by the forces of the triple alliance. In fact, however, the U.S. supplied arms to Israel, and petroleum to Britain and France. The CIA was busy preparing coups in Syria and Egypt, and engineering plots to assassinate Nasser (for which purpose three groups of specially trained gunmen were formed).

1958. Washington perpetrated an intervention in Lebanon and Jordan. The U.S. Sixth Fleet and the Marines were committed to open action on the pretext of "guaranteeing Lebanon's integrity."

subdued by military means." The Chancellor then voiced regret over the EEC's "inadequate contribution" to the war against terrorism.

That "self-criticism" was followed by action. Bonn, obviously trying to please Washington, was the first in the EEC to take measures against Libya by expelling a number of its diplomats. Moreover, Kohl demanded that West German industrialists limit their commercial ties with Libya. Many West Germans, in view of Kohl's moves to please the Reagan Administration, wonder if Bonn is pursuing a truly sovereign foreign policy.

The West German government has not yet produced any evidence in support of its allegation that Libya was involved in acts of terrorism, such as the explosion in the La Belle discotheque in West Berlin, which provided the pretext for the bombing raids on Tripoli and Benghazi. Small wonder: detectives working on the case believe, as Der Spiegel reports, that rival groups of drug peddlers and even proprietors of competing discotheques could have had motives for the act of terrorism.

Stern points out that American officials in West Berlin were warned by an anonymous informer about the explosion in the discotheque a few hours in advance but did not do anything to avert it and even neglected to pass the information on to the West Berlin police. Why?

Press correspondents in Shavat Village which was bombed by U.S. planes.

TASS photo

The West German opposition parties strongly condemned the piratical U.S. attack on Libya. Hans-Jochen Vogel, chairman of the Social Democratic faction in the Bundestag, said in parliament that Washington had flouted the norms of international law. Annemarie Borgmann, a Bundestag spokeswoman for the Greens, characterized the U.S. raid on Libya as an act of state terrorism. The Free Democrats, "junior partners" in the governmental coalition, were obviously worried too. It was only the Bavarian Christian Social Union led by Strauss that unconditionally supported the U.S. raid.

Tens of thousands of West Germans took part in protest demonstrations against the U.S. act of aggression. According to a public opinion poll conducted by Stern, 72 per cent of West Germans believe that Reagan was wrong to order the bombing of the Libyan cities. This view, incidentally, is shared by most of those who support the ruling parties. "These figures reflect something that goes beyond a reaction to an isolated incident, namely, the Europeans' deep-seated displeasure at the increasingly aggressive foreign policy of the United States," the magazine points out.

Reportage by
APN correspondents
E. MIKITENKO and
E. RYABTSEV (Benghazi)
New Times correspondents
S. GOLYAKOV (London)
A. TOLPEGIN (Bonn)

1967. Israel unleashed a war of aggression against Syria, Egypt and Jordan with the blessing of the U.S., which, as at the time of the triple aggression, preferred to act by stealth for the time being. It was somewhat later that it went over from secret patronage of, to open support for, the Israelis.

Since the advent of the current Administration, all aggressive anti-Arab actions have been openly initiated by Washington.

1982. The anti-Arab policy of state terrorism, pursued by Washington jointly with Tel Aviv, culminated in a joint armed intervention in Lebanon. Every new "guarantee" the Americans offered the Lebanese turned out to be merely a screen for brigandage. U.S. Marines landed in Beirut as part of NATO's "multinational force" for the alleged purpose of "guaranteeing the security of civilians." Instead, they prepared the ground for the Israelis and their mercenaries who massacred the residents of Sabrah and Shatilah.

After Israel had left Beirut, the Americans and NATO took over. In a joint venture against "terrorists," the Americans finally abandoned their stance as peacemakers. Palestinians and Lebanese—Moslems and Christians alike—were shot point-blank from the U.S. Sixth Fleet battleship New Jersey.

After the withdrawal of NATO's "multinational force" from Lebanon, the United States continued with its covert and overt involvement in regional Middle East conflicts, and consolidated its "strategic cooperation" with Israel which gradually developed into direct aggressive military interaction.

In his Middle East plan, the U.S. President promised the Lebanese help in reviving their war-ravaged country, and the peoples of the Middle East, a secure and guaranteed peace. The smouldering ruins of Lebanese cities are the best illustrations of what American "peacemaking" amounts to. Promised revival, the once-flourishing Arab country is now chaos and destruction. Peace, Camp-David style, has repeatedly erupted into war. President Reagan's name is now associated with the doctrine of neoglobalism rather than the "peace plan." The bomb explosions in Tripoli and Benghazi have exposed the doctrine for what it really is. Washington does not even bother any longer to camouflage its intentions with the rhetoric of peace. The very vocabulary it now uses—"punish," "teach a lesson," "avenge"—reveals the essence of the doctrine, which is nothing more than neocolonialism in updated guise.

L. MEDVEDKO, D.Sc. (Hist.)

The U.S.S.R. has submitted to the Geneva Disarmament Conference new proposals for banning chemical weapons

KILL THE "SILENT KILLERS"

It seemed forty years ago that the nuclear bomb had made chemical weapons at once senseless and superfluous, and that they would disappear of their own accord. This was, however, only an illusion. Far from disappearing, the "silent killers" have multiplied, and Western countries, in particular the U.S., have repeatedly used them.

Today chemical weapons are among the most dangerous and barbarous means of mass destruction. Until they are eliminated mankind will be in danger of a calamity of inconceivable proportions. Just a fraction of the chemical weapons stockpiled to date is enough to turn our earth into a lifeless desert.

How is this danger to be removed?

The Soviet Union has long and persistently been suggesting ways and means of solving this crucial problem. In 1982 it worked out Basic Provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, thus providing the groundwork for getting the discussions on the issue, which had been deadlocked for years, off the ground. Nevertheless, our Western partners at the negotiations, led by the U.S., have never responded to the Soviet initiative on the pretext of it being "difficult" to exercise control.

In the Soviet view, this problem does not exist. In his January 15 statement Mikhail Gorbachev stressed in particular the need to deliver the planet from chemical weapons by the end of the century under strict international control.

Moscow has gone a long way towards making this a reality. It has announced that it is prepared to indicate the exact locations of chemical-weapon plants, discontinue production and start elaborating the procedures involved in liquidating chemical-weapon manufacturing facilities. If the appropriate convention comes into force, we shall be ready to get down to the elimination of chemical-weapon stockpiles as such.

This is exactly what our country's latest initiative in this field is aimed at. Mikhail Gorbachev put it forward at the SUPG Congress in Berlin. An appropriate document has been submitted to the Geneva Disarmament Conference. Let us dwell on the Soviet proposals in more detail.

Imagine that the convention comes into force. The moment it happens, the participating states shall stop all activity at chemical-weapon plants and close them down within three months. However, as early as 30 days after the convention is implemented, they are to disclose the whereabouts of private and publicly owned plants manufacturing chemical weapons, binary weapon components included. Within six months all the participating states shall start eliminating their stockpiles of chemical weapons, and within a year destroy or dismantle plants that produce "silent killers." Chemical weapons are to be completely phased out in a decade, at the most.

But what about the verification and control the West is making such a fuss about? The U.S.S.R. has made all the necessary provisions in this respect. Let international inspectors themselves seal the facilities being closed off and then periodically check whether the seals have been tampered with and whether the facilities are really inactive. The Soviet Union also suggests a procedure in accordance with which international inspectors could monitor in person the major stages in the destruction or dismantling of these facilities. When everything has been done, another international inspection could be carried out.

Consequently, the plan suggested by the U.S.S.R. is realistic and concrete. It offers new opportunities for signing the convention. We know from past experience that an agreement usually takes effect two to three years after being signed. Consequently, the convention must be worked out in full in the next year of two.

The stand taken by the United States and some of its allies is an obstacle to this. Washington is bent on launching the production of binary weapons late next year and deploying them in Western Europe, without regard for any one or anything. This will naturally lead to a new aggravation of tension in Europe, add greatly to the danger of an armed conflict, and complicate the chemical-weapons ban talks now in progress at the Geneva Conference.

D. POGORZHELSKY

Immediately after the new Soviet initiatives had been made public, we contacted Geneva and asked Izvestia correspondent Vladimir Kuznetsov to interview some delegates at the Disarmament Conference. Here is what they had to say.

Roberto FRANCESCHI, head of the Italian delegation:

In the Soviet proposals I should like to single out the emphasis on a comprehensive solution to all the problems involved in the elimination of chemical weapons: the destruction of stockpiles and the plants that manufacture the weapons, and the problems of control and inspection. Specific time limits are set for the implementation of all the convention provisions, which is very important. Moreover, the Soviet proposals provide for the need to work out a procedure for closing and reorienting chemical-weapon plants. They help settle unresolved issues and pave the way for confidence among the convention signatories. They provide for an effective national and international inspection authority and make a mechanism for the elimination of chemical weapons a realistic proposition. I hope these proposals, like those of other countries, will expedite the elaboration of the convention and help carry out the plans for the elimination of chemical weapons by the beginning of the 21st century. A successful solution of the problem of chemical weapons will create a good precedent and bring the solution of other disarmament problems closer.

K.R. NARAYANAN, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs:

The project for the elimination of chemical weapons must be considered along with other Soviet initiatives. These are a stage-by-stage programme for delivering the world from nuclear weapons by the end of the present century, with space strike weapons banned, the proposal for the complete elimination of Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles in Europe, and the recent proposal to reduce conventional weapons from the Atlantic to the Urals. The proposal for chemical disarmament under inspection and control provides a concrete approach which the international community can and must adopt in other fields as well, particularly in nuclear disarmament. All it takes is political will and regard for the interests of people of all nations, who do not want to die either in a gas attack or a nuclear explosion.

This is why India, along with the other non-aligned countries, urges early disarmament and the implementation of the idea of peaceful coexistence among states.

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL

NEEDED: ACTION BY EVERYONE

Five doves nestling close together, wing to wing—the symbol of the cooperation and unity of the mass anti-war movements of five continents—greeted in colourful posters the participants in the session of the World Peace Council held in Sofia in late April.

For four days the peace supporters from many countries representing some 150 international and national organizations wrestled with the problem of which way the world's biggest and most influential peace movement should advance. They made a critical analysis of the forms and methods of its work and, responding to the spirit of the time, steered a course for the development of active cooperation with all peace forces, all anti-war movements in the world, a course towards overcoming disunity and prejudice, all that at times divides the members of the mass movement for peace.

The WPC has never been and never will be "neutral" in such vitally important issues as war and peace, WPC President Romesh Chandra said. And no one had any right to demand of it "non-alignment" with the policy of peace, reason and realism. "I have been greatly impressed by the innovative spirit of this session and by the accent placed on revealing the reserves of cooperation among the peace forces of the most diverse trends," Ilona Sebestyen, president of the Hungarian National Peace Council, observed during an intermission.

Discussing topical questions confronting the world organization, speakers at the session time and again cited some of the key points of Mikhail Gorbachev's message of greetings to the session: "We are living at a very difficult time, in a fragile world," it said in particular. "For the first time the problem of survival has presented itself to us all with stark simplicity. It is therefore not enough today to want peace, not enough to condemn the mounting military potential, not enough just to see whence the danger to mankind emanates. Today it is necessary to act persistently and purposefully. We must all take action, governments as well as the public forces."

The landmark character of the WPC session, the striving of its participants to find new ways and means of cooperation and the tendency to take a critical view of the path traversed in order to move forward with new energy were revealed already in the course of the session. Speakers pointed to the need for active work among the masses, for organizational forms to be made more flexible and for stereotypes to be discarded.

The session adopted a declaration—a political document defining the guidelines of the activity of the WPC and its national committees in the coming period. The final plenary meeting elected the leading bodies. Romesh Chandra (India) was reelected President, and the prominent Finnish peace champion Johannes Pakaslahti was chosen for the post of Secretary-General. Also elected was the WPC Presidential Committee, a sort of parliament of the world peace movement. It will have more than 200 members representing about a hundred different national movements and several international organizations.

V. GALIN

JAPAN

APPEAL FROM OKINAWA

Will it be heard in Tokyo?

Our own correspondent in Japan, Yuri Tavrovsky, reports from Naha, Okinawa.

An international conference of anti-nuclear organizations in the Asian Pacific region has ended in Naha. Speakers noted the special importance of the campaign for a nuclear-free Pacific in the light of ever newer types of nuclear weapons being deployed on American ships and bases in the region. But the peace workers are not standing idly by. In Japan, 887 local government bodies (almost a third of their total number) have adopted declarations proclaiming whole cities, districts, settlements and villages nuclear-free zones. These zones are inhabited by almost half the country's population. New Zealand has forbidden ships with nuclear weapons on board to enter its ports. The states of the South Pacific have signed an agreement on the establishment of a nuclear-free zone. The U.S. city of Boston has refused to be a port of call for warships carrying nuclear weapons.

The conference was addressed by representatives of anti-war organizations from all corners of Japan, from Australia, Thailand, India, the U.S., New Zealand and the Philippines. They shared their experience of conducting mass campaigns against nuclear

F-16 fighter-bomber capable of carrying nuclear weapons at the U.S. Air Force base at Misawa in Northeast Japan.

TASS photo

weapons and agreed on joint action. The conference was addressed, among others, by Gerald O'Brien, the well-known trade unionist and national president of the New Zealand Peace Council, whose speech was heard with keen interest. He spoke highly of the Soviet government's statement on the problems of the Asian-Pacific region, thanked the U.S.S.R. on behalf of the people of the South Pacific for supporting the idea of a nuclear-free zone in the region, and called on the governments of Asian and Pacific countries to give Moscow's proposals close consideration.

The conference participants adopted programme documents and approved the slogans of the campaign for a nuclear-free Pacific. On the evening of April 28 they took part in a massive anti-war meeting.

Our staff writer Leonid Mlechin analyzes the position of the Japanese government in this connection.

First of all, the idea of joint action in an armed conflict, worked out by the American and Japanese general staffs, provides for the use of nuclear weapons even if the enemy does not resort to them. , Speaking at the budgetary committee of the Japanese parliament's upper house, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone advocated the principle of the preventive use of nuclear weapons. "To deny this possibility means to deprive nuclear weapons of their deterrent force," he asserted.

Second, the government and the army are loth to deny themselves the possibility of developing, albeit in the long term, all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. At any rate, Defence Agency spokesmen of various ranks have repeatedly stated in parliament that such a possibility "is not ruled out by the Constitution."

Tokyo's stand on the issue of nuclear weapons takes on special significance in the light of Japan's possible involvement in SDI which will make the country completely dependent on the U.S. in the military and political respects. A Japanese delegation that acquainted itself with the progress the U.S. had made in developing space strike weapons has submitted a report to the government recommending that Japan should take part in SDI. And what about the resolution of the Japanese parliament on the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes? Is Japan going to discard its three non-nuclear principles: not to have nuclear weapons, not to produce them, and not to have them brought into the country? After all, it is common knowledge that American space strike weapons will include nuclear components.

K. Ueda, a Communist MP, informed the upper house's budgetary committee that the armed forces were already studying methods of combat involving nuclear weapons.

The Prime Minister said Japan was going to "investigate the effect of nuclear war on meteorological conditions," evidently this being the only aspect of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons not known to the Japanese. As far as their effect on whole cities and the people is concerned, one has only to ask the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

SOUTH AFRICA

TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

The South African government has repealed the pass law introduced in 1913. It required every African to carry a pass indicating race, place of residence and place of work. Under that law any African found without a pass was liable to be arrested. Altogether 18 million blacks have been put behind bars since the law became operative. Now the pass is to be replaced by an identity card which will be the same for all the inhabitants of South Africa irrespective of the colour of their skin. However, this does not apply to the 6.5 million Africans living in the four bantustans that have been granted a fiction of independence.

The abolition of the passes was clearly an enforced measure. The leaders of the anti-racist movement regard it as a victory for the Africans, but they are sceptical about the sincerity of the government's intentions. They fear that it might replace the pass law with some other discriminatory act. Even the newspaper Business Day, mouthpiece of the South African business world, has little faith in the government's good will. "This government's record of trickery and legislative sleight of hand," it says, "tempers any desire to welcome the reform, lest it proves to be yet another attempt to reimpose apartheid in a fresh guise."

Sure enough, simultaneously with the abolition of the passes, which was wrested from the government by the selfless struggle of the black majority, President Botha submitted a bill to parliament which enables the Minister of Law and Order to declare extensive areas "regions of unrest."

Moreover, the government has announced that residential segregation is to continue. Blacks are still deprived of political rights. In this connection the leaders of the anti-racist movement have advanced the slogan: "Too little, too late." The black majority, they say, will continue to fight for the complete liquidation of apartheid.

L. SKURATOV

South African police see a threat to the apartheid regime even in funerals of their victims. Above: a funeral procession being dispersed by the police.

Reuters-TASS photo

INDIA

TERRORISM IN PUNJAB

Punjab is again the scene of violence and the situation in that state is once more causing deep concern throughout India. The present wave of terror unleashed by the Sikh extremists is being compared here to what happened in that region two years ago, when in June 1984 the government of Indira Gandhi had to send regular troops against the separatists.

Indian TV reports from Punjab remind one of news from battlefronts. "Not a day without casualties" is the terrorists' slogan. Their targets are peaceful civilians, both Sikhs and Hindus. The number of casualties in April alone is close to 100. There has been an attempt on the life of Surjit Singh Barnala, chief minister of the state, a representative of the moderate wing of the Akali Dal party which came to power in Punjab in the state elections last September. The results of the elections in which more voters took part than ever before in the history of the state, despite the extremists' threats, were seen at the time as conclusive evidence that the absolute majority of the population of the Punjab—adherents of Sikhism (who make up slightly more than half of the state's population) as well as Moslems and Hindus—were opposed to the attempts to divide the country and favoured consolidation of national unity.

This, however, did not tally with the plans of the not very numerous but extremely bellicose extremist groupings. The fact is that the terror campaign they have launched is aimed at severing Punjab from India and creating a separate state to be known as Khalistan. This scheme is dangerous, among other things, because the government of the state headed by Barnala is often irresolute and at times inconsistent in dealing with the extremists. The half measures taken by the authorities in pursuit of an illusory consensus between the majority of the population and the extremists, combined with failure to resolve some social and economic problems, create a favourable soil for the anti-national actions of the separatists.

The prospect of stabilizing the situation in Punjab did not fit in with the plans not only of the local anti-national elements but also of their backers abroad who are bent on weakening India and even dismembering this great Asian country whose independent foreign policy causes displeasure on the other side of the ocean. Naturally, respectable politicians on the Potomac do not air these sentiments. But was it not their thoughts that were voiced by Ku Klux Klan leaders in a letter to a Sikh separatist group, a copy of which reached the Indian PTI agency. "We are against the Communists," they wrote, "and therefore we will support the Sikhs in their fight for liberation."

Transatlantic support is rendered through neighbouring Pakistan which has become an instrument of U.S. policy in the region. Speaking in April at a parliamentary hearing, Indian Minister of State for Home Affairs Arun Nehru said that the terrorists arrested in Punjab had admitted during interrogation that they had gone through training in special camps in the border areas of Pakistan.

But the pressure brought to bear on India from without does not end there. The recent visit of American warships to the Pakistan port of Karachi is regarded in Delhi as an anti-Indian show of the American flag, a means of pressuring India. At the same time, a new dollar injection for Pakistan, $4 billion this time, was announced in Washington. And U.S. customs duties on Indian textiles were raised again which will add to India's balance of payments difficulties. In a word, what is in question is an overseas-coordinated plan to put spokes in India's wheel, a plan of which aggravation of the Punjab situation is a component.

Indian public opinion therefore regards the Punjab crisis as a national crisis imposed on the country by domestic reaction and its accomplices abroad.

"We must reply to the present challenge to our national integrity," Asrarul Haque, chairman of the all-India committee of national unity and member of the upper chamber of Parliament, told New Times correspondent, "by uniting all the patriotic forces. This must not be interpreted as an attempt to distract the people from current problems. For what problem can be more urgent than that of preserving the freedom and the very existence of our country?"

Our Own Correspondent

Delhi

FRANCE

MURUROA ONCE AGAIN

After the American nuclear test in the Nevada desert, France carried out another nuclear explosion (the first this year) in the Mururoa atoll in the Pacific. Ever since the middle of the sixties, with a few intervals, Paris has been testing its nuclear devices there, despite the protests of Australia and New Zealand. This time too New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange criticized France for its actions and called for the conclusion as soon as possible of an agreement banning all tests.

Testing, as we know, is needed for the modernization of nuclear weapons. Paris, which has adopted a programme of building up its nuclear arsenal, makes no secret of this. According to the Washington Post, that arsenal is "growing dramatically." Plans for the future—up to the end of the century—provide for 96 missiles (with six warheads each) on six submarines, Hades missiles (a longer-range version) in place of Plutons, and Mirage-2000 jet fighters armed with nuclear missiles. France is also developing a new land-based missile similar to the U.S. Midgetman. President Mitterrand has said France may start producing neutron bombs "which would make it possible radically to change the balance of forces ... in Europe."

France never tires of saying that its nuclear potential is "tiny" compared with that of the United States and the Soviet Union. It must therefore be built up. But after all there is the Soviet plan for abolishing nuclear weapons by the end of the century. Paris (as well as London) could play its role in the realization of this plan by not increasing its nuclear arsenal for five or eight years while the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. would reduce their nuclear forces. But Paris does not care for that role.

D. MAXIMOV

SHADES OF THE BAY OF PIGS

The bitter lessons of the past have taught the CIA nothing—but merely given them an itch to recoup. Fresh evidence of this is the recent abortive attempt to re-enact the Bay of Pigs Operation when bands of mercenaries landed on Cuba on a mission to overthrow the people's government. Now, twenty-five years later, the CIA has decided to dig the old script out of the archives, update it a bit and put it into action as part of its strategy of neoglobalism.

At first everything went according to plan. The vessel Nobistor, with eight Americans and ten Argentinians on board, made its appearance in Brazilian territorial waters. The ship carried machine guns, hand grenades, rifles, landing craft and other assault equipment. In neutral waters the Nobistor, which flew a Ghanaian flag, was to have been joined by another ship with 80 Africans aboard. Under the leadership of the eight Americans, recruited expressly for the purpose from among the veterans of the U.S. dirty war against Vietnam, the gang was to have landed in Ghana and overthrow the lawful government.

The Ghanaian version of the Bay of Pigs Operation ended in failure. The Nobistor was detained by the Brazilian navy. Taken into custody, its crew and passengers talked. They are to be tried by a Brazilian court.

Commenting on the incident, many papers across the world remind their readers that the CIA has a bone to pick with the Ghanaian government, which foiled an American plot to overthrow it last November and expelled four CIA agents with diplomatic passports from the country. Before that, First Secretary Griffin of the U.S. Embassy and the Ambassador himself, T. Smith, had been ordered out in connection with spying activity. All this plus the trial, which ended recently in Sudan, of CIA agents who worked also for Israel's Mossed intelligence service, shows what alarming proportions the imperialist special services' subversive activities against African nations have assumed nowadays. Africans know to their cost what the doctrine of neoglobalism stands for in terms of harsh reality. In pursuance of this doctrine, Washington is prepared to go to any lengths—even at the risk of repeating itself.

K. EVGENYEV

WORK OF FICTIO

This publication in the Italian weekly Famiglia Cristiana (issue No. 8 for this year) is certainly worth saying a few words about. It provides a vivid illustration of what freedom of information exchange means to some of its Western advocates. The weekly carried an "interview" granted to its correspondent Vincenzo Maddaloni by Professor Victor Garadzha, Director of the U.S.S.R. Institute for Scientific Atheism. We asked Professor Garadzha to comment on this.

"I must say I rather enjoyed the unexpected experience of reading questions never put to me answers I had never gi Until recently my idea magazine interview cedure was as follows: interviewer asks questi the interviewee ansv them, and the maga prints both the quest and the answers. Howe the Famiglia Cristiana respondent obviously sidered this procedure primitive.

"To believe Madda (though you shouldn't), have magnanimously vited the Pope to the So Union. If he wants to m our Catholics, Madda 'quotes' me as saying, right, let him come ove

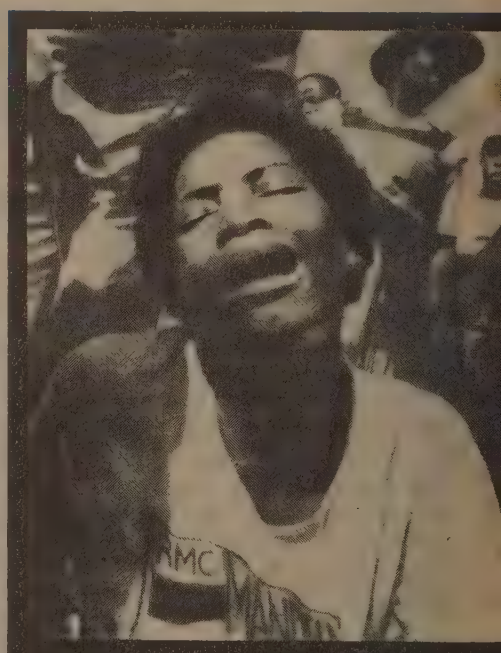
WHO REALLY DID IT

At about 3 a.m. a bomb went off at a jail in Celle, Lower Saxony. The following morning the media reported "another left-wing terrorist outrage." The date was July 25, 1978. More than seven years later it came to the knowledge of Hannoversche Allgemeine journalists that the explosion had been the work of "experts" from the so-called Group-9—a paramilitary anti-terrorist squad under the Federal Minister of the Interior. The whole operation had been conceived and planned by the Lower Saxony branch of the Department for Safeguarding the Constitution (DSC) with the knowledge of the federal authorities. Prime Minister Ernst Albrecht (CDU) of Lower Saxony confirmed that the information was genuine. It has also become known that in 1977 a DSC agent had supplied neonazis with explosives. The ensuing blasts in Hanover and Flensburg were also ascribed to left-wing terrorists.

These shocking revelations have come at the very moment when the F.R.G. government and the right-wing press are following Washington's lead in making so much of the "danger of terrorism." They suggest that acts of terrorism are not always committed by those who are accused of them.

Our Own Correspondent

Bonn



While American bombs were killi people in the north of Africa, in Libya blood was being shed in the south of t continent as well, not by the American but by their partners in "constructive eng agement"—South Africa's racists. Th girl's brother has been murdered by police men. The killings continue.

Reuters pho

n general, Maddaloni ers me a great deal. lough he's got my name age all wrong, he es me 'head of the order atheistic missionaries,' ess. For some reason he ks, however, that my ciates and I only do retical studies at the itute, leaving it to rs to do the 'dirty work' ringing pressure to bear believers. You under- nate our 'order,' Signor ldaloni, but it hardly es any difference be- se your purpose was, as e it, to create the im- ssion that freedom of gion, enshrined in the stitution of the U.S.S.R., uppressed in our coun-

You have put amazing ds into the mouth of 'head of the order of eistic missionaries,' i.e., ue. I said, I read in your gazine, that an 'extra- inary religious awaken- is to be observed all r the world' (the Soviet on included). I would ily have argued with self on this point if nor Maddaloni had let

And another thing, nor Maddaloni. On the ole, you and your ma- ine have disappointed . Why don't you think ore you write? One of questions, as formulat- by Famiglia Cristiana, s about 'the celebration the millennium of the h of Cyril and Metho- s.' Do you take Cyril l Methodius for twins? I gest you read the en- lical 'Slavorum apostoli' Pope John Paul II pub- ed in 1985 on the occa- n of the 1100th anniver- y of Methodius' death. r myself, I am no longer lined to read your pub- ation, and I warn all se who wish to know truth about the attitude religion in our country to read it either."

Professor
VICTOR GARADZHA

"YELLOW RAIN" IN HONDURAS?

Many people in Cortes, a northern department of Honduras, developed skin ulcers. Some complained of chest pains. Presently their conditions deteriorated sharply—so much so that urgent medical care was needed. Lazaro Gutierrez, an elderly peasant, was the first to be laid up. Later, his little grandson was rushed to the Leonardo Martinez army hospital near the town of San Pedro Sula. Altogether, 15 children were taken ill in the community.

What kind of an epidemic had hit the department of Cortes? Peasants from the villages of El Cerron, Agua Colorada and El Venado told local newsmen that they had heard the rumble of low-flying planes one night and run out of their homes to take a look. Suddenly, a strange "yellow rain" poured down on them. Was it the "rain" that had caused them so much suffering? Gutierrez and many of his fellow villagers think it was. Gutierrez says that children and adults developed skin ulcers after the planes sprinkled the village with yellow liquid. Following his testimony the peasant was threatened but was not prepared to say by whom.

Certain people probably have no interest in publicizing the incident. Experts are of the opinion, however, that the United States tested Agent Orange in Honduras. Americans are known to have used this defoliant in Vietnam, destroying 40,000 hectares of woods, and doing irreparable damage to millions of Vietnamese and nearly 16,000 American soldiers. Did they test it in an out-of-the-way part of Honduras at a time when the Pentagon was conducting routine exercises in the country?

The Honduran parliament has decided to set up a special commission of inquiry to look into the matter.

V. DOLGOV
Our Own Correspondent
Managua

THE CALVI BRIEFCASE MYSTERY

On June 10, 1982, the banker Roberto Calvi, a member of the Freemasons' Lodge P2 fled from Italy taking with him a black briefcase he had never parted with even in his sleep. Investigators believe the briefcase contained documents that would shed light on major financial transactions. The ex-president of the Banco Ambrosiano was accused of having illicitly taken currency out of Italy.

Eight days after his flight, Calvi was found hanged under London's Black Friars Bridge. The briefcase had gone. Many in Italy wondered who wanted Calvi dead. The briefcase, it was thought, would provide the answer. It was looked for in vain. Recently, however, almost four years after Calvi's death, it reappeared as if of its own accord, under extremely strange circumstances.

An anonymous caller told Senator Giorgio Pisano of the neo-fascist party that he was prepared to hand over Calvi's briefcase for half a billion lire. Pisano haggled and had soon succeeded in beating the price down to a tenth. They arranged to meet in the Senator's Milan apartment at 13 Via Pier Capponi, where the mysterious briefcase was exchanged for 50 million lire. It turned out to contain two diplomatic passports, family photographs, strongbox keys and a few letters of little, if any, use to investigators. The letters merely reaffirmed the Vatican bank's involvement in Calvi's financial machinations, mentioned a few high-ranking clergymen—and that was all.

Roberto Calvi was a bosom friend of the financier Michele Sindona. The latter often said he was familiar with the mysterious "List of 500" which contained the names of politicians, bankers and industrialists who took currency out of Italy illicitly and deposited it in reliable banks. Sindona and Calvi were their trusted agents. Consequently, they knew too much—and forfeited their lives for it. Calvi was the first to go, and Sindona followed him recently, dispatched with a dose of potassium cyanide in his armoured prison cell in Voghera, Italy.

Photo from Panorama magazine (Italy)

"Tossing up" the briefcase—with its contents doubtless greatly depleted—was an obvious attempt to sweep the scandal under the carpet, this time without any bloodshed, and convince Italians that there was nothing mysterious about the Calvi briefcase. But the ploy misfired. Those who had seen much of the banker in the last months of his life testified that the briefcase had indeed belonged to Calvi but that many of the papers it contained—exactly those the investigators need to find the truth—were missing.

P. NEGOITSA
Trud correspondent,
exclusively for New Times
Rome

WHY WE ARE CALM

LEV BEZYMENSKY,
New Times Political Analyst

The award for architecture in this year's list of Lenin Prize winners, announced traditionally on the birthday of the great Lenin, was somewhat unusual. It was awarded not for some new building, not for some new architectural ensemble, as has been the case before, but for restoration. For the raising from ashes and ruins of the magnificent palace and park ensembles in the environs of Leningrad—Petrodvorets, Pavlovsk and Pushkin.

Victory Day is a fitting occasion to pay tribute to the scientists and craftsmen who returned to us and to the whole world these priceless cultural monuments. But it is also in place to recall why they had to be restored. Who wrecked these palaces which once belonged to tsars and emperors whose power was overthrown by the victorious proletariat of Russia? Not the proletariat. The proletariat, which the anti-Communists of all hues, from Kerensky to Hitler (and the list could be continued), proclaimed the "enemy of world civilization," carefully tended the parks and gardens and kept the palaces and pavilions in perfect condition.

Let us recall why these architectural masterpieces of Empress Catherine's time were reduced to ruins. It was not a matter of chance, but of deliberate design. The war unleashed by Hitler imperialism against the Soviet Union—a war of social revenge—was thoroughly and carefully planned in advance. As regards Leningrad, it was to be wiped off the face of the earth and its population exterminated. That is recorded in black and white in the documents of the nazi military and political leadership.

Does all this belong to the past, have all these plans been forgotten? No, a thousand times no. Not only old photographs but also the radiant beauty of the reborn palaces are reminders. In the sparkling water spouted by the Samson fountain one senses also a warning for the future. What if all this has to be restored again? Shall we have to search once again for the Amber Room, this time not in abandoned mine shafts but in the rich collections of American art fanciers? True, cynics reassure us that if American calculations are to be believed a nuclear strike at Leningrad would leave nothing of the palaces in its environs or of the museums where the old architects' drawings are stored. There is also the neutron variant which would leave the palaces intact, but there would be no more visitors, no one but American soldiers in radiation-proof suits and masks who would gape at the splendid palace walls and laugh at those funny Russians who spent so much money to preserve them.

We are not in the habit of painting lurid pictures of the nuclear Apocalypse—not because we are chicken-hearted, but because the Soviet people have had enough experience of the horrors of war. We do not need a sci-fi mentality, and we revere too much the memory of our fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters to take every opportunity to reopen unhealed wounds. But there is something more to our attitude to thermonuclear war than just understanding of its horrors and indescribable consequences: our sense of responsibility for the fate of mankind, a sense that did not leave us in the years of the war and has become even keener in the critical situation of today.

Let me elaborate. During the war much depended on how cooperation proceeded between the powers of the anti-Hitler coalition. The important thing was whether countries with different social systems could work together in face of a danger that threatened them all. The story of the opening of the second front abounded in critical moments. The Western allies no less than three times changed their minds about it, leaving us to shed our blood in single combat with the enemy. We could have told them: very well, we'll manage without you, and indeed, in the beginning of 1944 it was already clear that we really could have done so.

But the Soviet Union did not do so, and did not even think of doing so. Our sense of responsibility was too great—responsibility for the impending victory, for the lives of Soviet people, for the freedom of the peoples of enslaved Europe. Patiently and perseveringly we negotiated with our allies. Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam were milestones on this difficult road which was to lead us to the Great Victory.

But to return to the present. The nuclear age has changed a great many things in the life of the world community, but it has not relieved the states and statesmen of responsibility for the future. It has rather heightened that responsibility, especially of those who by the will of history have come to possess nuclear weapons. In the new situation the danger of a conflict breaking out is far greater than before World War II, not to speak of the consequences the nuclear variant of social revenge could have.

We now have before us a picture which at first glance might appear strange and incomprehensible to some: the United States, boasting of its nuclear might and using it to threaten the "empire of evil" (meaning the Soviet Union), is staging one provocation after another, while the Soviet Union....

Imagine what would have happened had it not been U.S. warships that intruded into the coastal waters of the Crimea, but Soviet battleships that closed in on the shores of Florida?

What would happen if it were not the U.S. but the Soviet Union that continued nuclear explosions and exploded an underground nuclear device while a moratorium announced by the United States was in force?

What would happen if the Soviet Union laid the blame for some bomb blast in an Aeroflot agency abroad on Zionist organizations and bombed Tel Aviv and Haifa?

More such hypothetical questions could be asked, although the answers are clear even to the die-hard anti-Communists who would like to provoke us to take counteraction. We do not propose to take an eye-for-eye, tooth-for-tooth approach, permitted though it is even by the Christian morality President Reagan is so fond of invoking.

We do not accept the logic of escalation which accelerates the fatal drift to the brink of the abyss. Patience is not a sign of weakness, but rather of strength, of calm confidence of being in the right. One can only commend Libya for the restraint it displayed under American bombing.

We say to those who would impel the world towards military conflict:

what would happen to the human race if the Soviet Union acted as the United States does? But such a shortsighted, egoistic, adventuristic policy is utterly alien to socialism. This is why our proposals aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons and checking the arms race remain in force. It will never be too late for the West to join in them. But it will be late if the world reaches the point of no return.

The present anniversary of the defeat of fascism and the end of World War II is an appropriate occasion to give thought to the destinies of peace. For the Soviet people these are sacred days in which joy merges with grief, jubilation with sorrow. For in June it will be 45 years since the nazi invasion. But from these mixed feelings we derive confidence in the justice of our cause, both within the country and in the world arena. A nation that prevailed over the nazi aggressor knows its strength and potentialities. A nation that withstood the savage blockade of Leningrad and has restored its undying beauty turns away with contempt from the imperialist would-be arbiters of other peoples' destinies. We turn away from them, for it is beneath our dignity to become involved in the vicious circle of provocation.

In the early years of the worldwide anti-war movement Anna Seghers called it the "strength of the weak," implying that an individual, weak though he is, can impart strength to the movement. But there is also the "strength of the strong." I have in mind not the advocates of positions-of-strength policies who reach for the big stick, but those endowed with moral and material strength who make considered use of that strength.

The Soviet people do not forget that it is essential to maintain their strength at the proper level. To this end we are exerting every effort needed to ensure the country's defence capability and the security of its frontiers. If nuclear tests are needed, we shall conduct them, though we are in no hurry to do so. If a reply is needed to the "star wars" threat, we shall give it. But we shall not allow ourselves to be provoked. Our reply will not be what they want, but what we ourselves want.

On May 9 the Soviet people will pay tribute to the memory of the fallen with a minute of silence. We shall remember those who did not return. We shall also remember the heroic labour effort of the Soviet rear. We shall remember the valiant fighting men of the allied armies. And the Resistance heroes who gave their lives. May this moment of solemn silence give new strength to all those who cherish peace. Strength and calm confidence. ■

SEEING IS BELIEVING

The nice boys and girls in the photograph are seniors from two American high schools in Rutherford, New Jersey, and in Boston. They are on holiday in the U.S.S.R., and their names are Kathlin, Kemberly, Cecilia, Tom, Keith, Jeanette, Darren. . . .

Perched on the dais in the foyer of the Hotel Orlyonok (Eaglet) in Moscow—and let me note that Americans feel at ease anywhere—they said in chorus that they would give this interview together.

"Have you seen 'Rocky IV'? Did you like it?"

"Yes, we have." (They had all seen it, but did not all agree in their assessment of this vicious anti-Soviet film. Some said: "Yes, we liked it, it showed real men." Others: "No, we didn't like it, too much jaw-punching." Or: "It's typical Hollywood stuff, nothing like the real thing," "It's viewable." Or: "What's wrong with it? First the Russian punches the American and then our guy punches your guy.")

"Didn't you think it's strange that the Russian boxer looked so frightful?"

"Back home we didn't. But I must say we haven't seen such frightful people here. Russians generally are quite nice."

"Have you seen any other films in which we are made out to be horrible?"

"Of course. We often have films like that on TV, but not many people believe them."

"Are you quite sure not many do? Or do you just think so?"

"Perhaps older people believe it, but most young people don't. Generally speaking, only people who don't have access to other information fall for all they see on the telly."

"Do you mean to say you do have other information?"

"Well, we're learning Russian and our teachers tell us about your history and culture."

"So we are not very like the way we're painted in America?"

"Of course not. After hearing all that talk [red-headed Darren Steele was speaking] my granny was really scared when I was getting ready to go to the Soviet Union. She tried to frighten me into not going. Now it just seems funny. When I get back I'll tell her that you don't have any horrors. We've been to Leningrad. It's a lovely city, and the people there are very polite and courteous. And there are fine boys and girls there, who adore modern music just like we do. They asked us all about America."

"Then our two peoples could live in peace all right?"

"Sure."

"What's standing in the way?"

"We don't know."

"Would you say we want to fight America?"

"Oh, no. What for? We've heard that Russia has suggested ending nuclear explosions. But Reagan also seems to have suggested that. Perhaps you should have backed him."

"Now supposing one of you were to become President, what would he do to make sure everyone lived in peace?"

"Who knows, perhaps [after some thought], we should trade. Because when people trade they don't want to fight. And they should also meet more often, get acquainted, write letters. . . . After all, seeing is believing."

T. FIRSOVA

Photo by V. Panov

MEMORY, MEMORY...

ANATOLY CHLENOV

I am leafing through a notebook, in a shabby blue cover. Some of the pages are missing, and the pencilled notes have faded—the notebook is over 40 years old. It contains the autographs of 33 Belgian generals whom the Soviet Army set free from Prenzlau camp on April 27, 1945, after five years of nazi captivity.

At the end of April 1945 our 70th Army was fighting on the right flank of the forces advancing on Berlin. Having assault-crossed the lower reaches of the Oder, our units rushed into Mecklenburg Province and mounted their last offensive on Rostock and Schwerin where we were to link up with our British allies.

I was then a young intelligence officer at the army headquarters. One day, when I was poring over a heap of captured documents, word came that a plane was waiting to take me on an urgent mission. "Army commander's orders, Captain!"

Our troops had liberated a POW camp near the town of Prenzlau. There turned out to be about 500 prisoners there, most of them in uniforms we couldn't identify. None spoke any Russian. Questions asked in German were pointedly ignored. As bad luck would have it, nobody at the divisional headquarters knew either English or French. They were unable to find out who the inmates of the camp were: our allies or nazis in disguise. My English and French came in very handy.

The prisoners proved to be allied officers, most of them Belgians and Dutchmen taken back in May 1940 when their countries were occupied by nazi Germany.

The Belgian officers included all of the country's 33 generals. They were extremely grateful to their Soviet liberators and admired the Russian soldiers' courage, stamina and combat skill. I explained, of course, that their freedom had been brought by the troops of the famous Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky whose name, like that of Marshal Georgi Zhukov, was familiar to them.

The nazis had tried hard to talk the Belgian generals into accepting Hitler's "new order" in exchange for freedom and their return to Belgium. But none of the generals proved a traitor. The nazis then subjected them to every abuse and humiliation. "We have suffered defeat in an unequal fight but we have honestly done our military duty," the generals replied to all exhortations. "We have surrendered on our King's orders. Later, the King made peace with Hitler, but this is his personal affair and does not concern us. We are prisoners of war and shall remain such."

Having fulfilled my mission, I left the camp and returned to my army's headquarters. It was years later that I learned what had happened there within two hours of our departure: ten or so German planes raided the camp and bombed the deserted barracks and the neighbouring buildings to which the Belgian generals had been moved. By taking the generals out of the zone of hostilities, Soviet soldiers saved their lives a second time.

April 27, the day on which we liberated the prisoners in the camp near Prenzlau, is an important date in the history of Soviet-Belgian relations.

Today one cannot help thinking about something else. On that day the Belgian generals were lavish in their gratitude to the Soviet soldiers and invited us to Belgium, saying they'd like us to meet their wives and their children and grandchildren. Do the generals (if still alive) or their families ever think of that now, when the Belgian public is vehemently protesting against the deployment in Belgium of American missiles targeted on the Soviet Union?

May 10, 1945. Marshal Rokossovsky and Field Marshal Montgomery meet. Captain Chlenov is second from left.
Photo by the courtesy of the author

We asked Trud correspondent in Brussels Vyacheslav Boikov to answer that question. Here is what he writes:

—sometimes it's short

A "theoretical seminar"—a pro-NATO event held regularly in the "Atlantic capital," as Brussels is sometimes called—met in the Egmont Palace a year ago, shortly before the 40th anniversary of the defeat of nazi Germany. The subject of the seminar—"The Future of European Security Within NATO Framework"—showed clearly enough what it was all about. Had it not been for NATO, it was implied, the West European countries would have long lost their political independence and become little short of vassals to Moscow.

On the eve of VE Day this anti-Soviet ritual seemed especially blasphemous. Following yet another mention of the "Soviet threat," a journalist from a socialist country sitting next to me remarked: "How can they have the heart to impute aggressive intentions to a country which gave 20 million lives to liberate Europe from the nazis? Had it not been for the Soviet Army, even the people sitting in this hall might have met entirely different fates."

What happened a little later provided a vivid illustration to my colleague's words.

During an interval, I met Lieutenant-General Blondiau who before his retirement had headed the royal military court. The fact that I was a Soviet journalist probably came as a surprise to him. However, after a brief pause, he said: "Incidentally, your troops released me from a nazi POW camp at the end of the war. You probably know the story of Belgian POWs who were freed from Prenzlau camp. Would you like to meet a few more former POWs? They are present at this seminar."

Blondiau introduced me to his two colleagues—a retired major-general and a colonel.

"In Prenzlau they were young lieutenants like myself," he said.

I asked him whether any of the generals released from Prenzlau camp were still alive.

"Unfortunately, no. After all, forty years have passed since then."

Asked whether they remembered April 27, 1945, when Prenzlau was liberated, the three said unanimously: "Yes, we do, as if it happened yesterday. Such things are unforgettable." Then, interrupting each other, they started telling me what had happened to them on the eve of liberation.

"Taking advantage of the confusion caused by the retreat of the nazi troops," Major-General John Grovin (Ret.) recalled, "several of my compatriots and myself fled from the camp and hid in a barn. But the nazis found us. Had we made such an abortive getaway attempt earlier, we would certainly have been shot. But your troops were approaching, and the German officer who interrogated us was concerned more than anything for his own skin. So he let us go thinking we might do him more good alive—as witnesses to his 'humanity'—than dead. However, we only felt we had really been saved after the Soviet troops had marched into Prenzlau."

The other officers also recalled their liberation with gratitude. They remembered April 27, 1945, well. But what, in that case, had brought them to a seminar where the Soviet Army was described as a potential aggressor? This question noticeably embarrassed the officers, but after a pause one of them said: "Unfortunately, much has changed over the past forty years. We take different views of the world. Whether we like it or not, the cold war and belonging to different military alliances have made us opponents."

"In 1945 we also took different views of the world but this didn't prevent us from being allies, did it?"

This question was left unanswered. A bell announced the end of the interval, the retired Belgian officers excused themselves and hurried back into the hall. ■

The Soviet Peace Fund celebrates its first quarter-century

I AM SENDING THIS DONATION...

The Soviet Peace Fund was established on the initiative of the Soviet Peace Committee 25 years ago, in April 1961. The chairman of its board, former world chess champion ANATOLY KARPOV describes the organization's activities in an interview with our reporter Roman Krestyaninov.

...Everyone was busy in the large room filled with mailbags. The mail was checked in by a special commission: there were many parcels containing valuables, such as cash, bonds and jewelry. They came from many cities and villages of the Soviet Union.

My first question to Anatoly Karpov was about the people who write to the Peace Fund.

They are people from different walks of life and nationalities, men and women, pensioners and schoolchildren. They share with us their ideas about ways to safeguard world peace. And many of them contribute materially to the peace effort. About 100 million Soviet citizens, almost every Soviet family, have made donations, which add up to an impressive sum.

The sources from which the Fund is replenished are varied. There is the money earned by work collectives and individuals in their free time. Money also comes from personal savings, bonuses for inventions or author's royalties. Takings from special performances, concerts, lectures and sports competitions are contributed quite frequently. We also receive family treasures and heirlooms that have been passed from generation to generation.

Many contributions come from other countries, from our compatriots living abroad and from foreign nationals. Foreign tourists who come to the U.S.S.R. also make donations. Artistes who give guest performances in our country often contribute box-office takings from their concerts to the Peace Fund. Such donors include popular singers Toto Cutugno and Gianni Morandi from Italy, Dean Reed from the U.S.A., Lili Ivanova from Bulgaria, the Japanese group Blue Jeans and many others.

What do you do with this money?

The Fund finances a number of mass public organizations, such as the Soviet Peace Committee, the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation, the Soviet Women's Committee, the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and the War Veterans Committee.

The cause of peace is inseparable from international solidarity, and that is why we give help to victims of imperialist aggression, apartheid and genocide, and to the populations of countries hit by natural disasters, especially to children. The Fund also awards scholarships to students from developing countries. Today more than 4,000 scholarship holders from 65 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America are receiving higher education in the Soviet Union.

The Fund gives money to build monuments to Soviet soldiers who died in the second world war both in our country and abroad. For instance, we contributed 15 million rubles to the construction of a magnificent Victory Monument in Moscow.

How does the general public, and the individuals and organizations that contribute money to the Peace Fund, influence its activities?

Many people who write to us specify how they want their contribution to be used and we follow their instructions to the letter. The Fund was set up by the public and is governed by the public. Its supreme leading body is the national conference of participants in the Fund, which is convened on a regular basis. Between conferences, activities are supervised by an elected

The young textile worker (top) has donated her day's earnings to the Peace Fund. Collecting donations to the Peace Fund in a Tajik mosque.

Photos by courtesy of Soviet Peace Fund

board, whose members include, among others, the popular singer Lyudmila Zykina, pilot-cosmonauts Svetlana Savitskaya and Vladimir Aksyonov, composer Alexandra Pakhmutova, Metropolitan Alexius of Tallinn and Estonia, forger Konstantin Malin and poet Robert Rozhdestvensky. All of them work on a voluntary basis, without any pay. The Fund has more than 350,000 assistance commissions with a total of about 5 million volunteers in all the republics, territories, regions, cities and districts of the Soviet Union.

How are the Fund's activities affected by the domestic and international situation?

The flow of letters and money orders to the Fund virtually never dries up. But there is some ebb and flow. For instance, during the preparations for the 27th Party Congress and during the congress itself we were inundated with mail. People wrote to us of their approval of the Party's policy, its plans for socio-economic development and its programme for safeguarding peace, and also told us about their cash contributions to the Fund. The Fund could be described as a barometer of the public mood. The Soviet people are sensitive to any aggravation of the international situation, to any act of imperialist aggression or intervention in the affairs of others. Working for the Peace Fund, I came to feel especially keenly how Soviet people share in the grief of others. As soon as the news came of the famine in Ethiopia, we began receiving large numbers of letters and money orders with requests to give help to the Ethiopian population. Acts of aggression in Lebanon and, more recently, the bombing of Libya, and also the growing threat posed to Nicaragua's independence by the U.S. evoke in the Soviet people a very humane reaction, the desire to help those in trouble. They want to give practical aid as well as are expressing their solidarity.

Are there any similar organizations in other countries? What international contacts does the Soviet Peace Fund maintain?

Our Fund is unique both in its nature and its scope. It is truly a people's organization established by the public will and governed by public representatives. There is no other organization in any country that is backed by such a large-scale public movement. There are peace funds abroad but most of them are purely welfare organizations, supported by donations from rich patrons. We maintain business contacts with some of them. This year, for instance, we are planning to have a meeting with representatives of the U.S. Fund for Peace, with which we would like to cooperate.

They often say in the West that there is no truly public movement for peace in the U.S.S.R. and call in question the voluntary character of our peace activities. What would you say on this score?

Letters from Soviet people give much food for thought about the nature, origins and motivation of our movement. They bring forth the soul of the people, as it were, revealing everything that motivates and moves them. It is perfectly clear to me that this strong desire for peace is directed not by a single will but by the hearts and minds of Soviet citizens, their care for a peaceful future for their children and for the preservation of life on earth. Our desire for peace feeds on the historical experience of the Soviet people, who lived through the horrors of the past war. More than that, this truly public movement reflects our whole way of life, which brings up our people in the spirit of humanism. The Soviet people have realized a simple truth: one should fight against the threat of war before it has actually broken out. All this, I think, makes it absolutely clear why our movement for peace is entirely voluntary. ■

IF ALL ASIA WORKED TOGETHER...

The call for Asian and Pacific cooperation contained in the statement of the Soviet government on the situation in this vast area, the Indian PTI agency stresses in a dispatch from its Moscow correspondent, offers an alternative to exclusive groups such as the proposed Washington-Tokyo-Seoul axis and to the idea of a Pacific community designed to cultivate protectionism and discriminatory trade and economic practices.

"The statement of the Soviet government is very timely," a high-ranking official of the Indian Foreign Ministry told your correspondent. "The Soviet Union is a great Asian and Pacific power and it is only natural that it should be concerned about the situation taking shape here. The Soviet Union's new constructive initiative is regarded in Delhi as a component of the Soviet concept of a comprehensive system of international security.

"The hotbeds of conflicts on the Asian continent," the official continued, "are due not least of all to external forces that are seeking to restore their former positions. In India's opinion, the projected Pacific community, for instance, would only aggravate the situation since the idea is to set it against the rest of the countries of the region. The countries of the continent should gradually get an all-Asian dialogue going and, by joint effort, settle the outstanding issues and conflicts.

"Is it not such a dialogue that the Soviet Union is calling for?"

"The idea of joint effort put forward by Mikhail Gorbachev during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the U.S.S.R. in May last year and developed further in the present statement of the Soviet government is consonant with India's view."

The National Herald, a newspaper close to government circles, calls for the revival of the spirit of the Asian Relations Conference held under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru in Delhi in 1947. A similar conference now, the paper says, would help to start a collective dialogue in Asia in the interests of ensuring security on the continent on a multilateral basis.

CONFRONTATION? NO, COOPERATION

World peace is made up of peace in the various regions of our planet. On the Asian continent and in the Pacific area peace and fruitful regional cooperation are of course no less imperative than in other parts of the globe. All the more so since they account for nearly two thirds of the world's population.

This vast region has its own specific problems, at times formidable ones. The relations among the countries that go into it are far from simple. But, given good will and statesmanlike wisdom, all problems can be resolved in the long run.

The trouble, however, is that improvement of the political climate in the Asian and Pacific region is obstructed by the U.S. and its allies. Washington and, in its footsteps, Tokyo and Seoul are engaged in bloc-building, the forming of all manner of military-political and economic alignments and exclusive groupings opposed to other Asian and Pacific countries. Such a policy obviously could lead to a serious aggravation of tension in Asia and the Pacific, where the interests of so many countries of the world intertwine. Only by promoting cooperation open to all, not by setting one group of countries against another, can and should good-neighbourly interstate relations be built in this as well as other parts of the world.

The Soviet Union is one of the biggest Asian and Pacific countries and hence it is keenly interested in the establishment and promotion of such cooperation. Difference in social systems and ideologies should not be an obstacle to this.

On April 23 the Soviet government issued a statement proposing bilateral and multilateral consultations with a view to the achievement of better understanding and greater confidence among the countries of Asia and the Pacific and the creation thereby of the preconditions for the convocation of an all-Asian forum to work out constructive solutions jointly. The statement points to the possibility of holding a separate conference of the Pacific countries to examine questions relating to security in that area, economic security included. A number of Pacific countries have already advanced ideas and suggestions worthy of serious attention concerning ways and means of strengthening security in the region. The Soviet Union believes that a stabilizing role could be played by confidence-building measures and reduction of naval activity in the Pacific. The creation in the Asian and Pacific region of nuclear-free zones would be a highly important and useful step.

In its statement the Soviet government proposed the beginning of a broad exchange of views among all the interested Asian and Pacific countries on the promotion of equal, mutually beneficial and stable cooperation in the commercial, economic, technological, scientific and cultural spheres.

"Our country," the statement says, "is ready to take the most active part in such regional peaceful cooperation and to use to this end the economic, scientific and technological potential at its disposal."

A. USVATOV

The imperative need for efforts in this direction was brought home forcefully to the Indian public by the recent U.S. aggression against Libya. The concentration of an American nuclear fleet and the Rapid Deployment Force in the Indian Ocean, the weekly Mainstream commented, presents a real threat to the littoral countries: if any one of them should displease Washington it could share the fate of Libya, or worse.

And how many American military bases there are in Japan, South Korea and the Philippines! What guarantee is there that Washington will not use them as springboards of aggression, just as it used its air bases in Britain, from where U.S. planes took off to bomb Tripoli and Benghazi? The Pentagon's military installations turn the countries where they are located into hostages to the Reagan Administration's adventuristic neoglobalist policy.

The Indian public is becoming increasingly aware that it is imperialist interference in Asian affairs that is the cause of the existing and maturing local conflicts in this area. This awareness was clearly evident in a discussion on Asian cooperation for security and development sponsored by the Delhi journal Secular Democracy. The speakers pointed out that ensuring security in the region is impeded by U.S. intervention in the affairs of Asian countries.

The chief editor of the journal, D.R. Goyal, stressed that the ending of the U.S. presence in Asia in all its forms would help to ensure security on the continent. Asia, which can be proud of its ancient cultural and philosophical heritage, should not remain outside the popular movement against war and the arms buildup which is gaining momentum in Europe and North America.

L. ZHEGALOV
Our Own Correspondent

Delhi

OCEAN OF THE FUTURE

Report from Tokyo

"The Mediterranean is the sea of the past, the Atlantic is the ocean of the present, but the Pacific is the ocean of the future." These words can often be heard at symposiums and conferences organized in countries of the Pacific region.

Speakers contributing to such discussions agree that the tremendous economic, scientific and cultural potential of the region would be utilized far more efficiently if it were possible to set up a system of multilateral cooperation taking account of the interests of all the countries participating in it as well as those of each individual state. It has been proposed in particular to base this system on the concept of a Pacific economic community.

What do people think about it in Japan?

For over a century the Pacific Ocean has been the main object of Tokyo's economic, political and, in certain periods, military expansion. Today Japan accounts for more than 20 per cent of trade in the Pacific region. It is also its most active investor of capital in it. These factors have kindled Japanese strategists' hopes of making their country the centre of the Pacific region holding all the strings of economic and political relations within it. And by strengthening its ties with the ASEAN countries, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, Japan is trying to create a firm political base in the international arena. At the same time Tokyo realizes that at the current stage its chances of success without Washington's approval are slim. Over almost the entire postwar period U.S. attitudes to Tokyo's regional projects have been fairly cool. Not without reason did Washington view the Japanese proposals not only as a desire to pursue a more independent and active foreign policy, but also to acquire the status of an economic "locomotive" in the Pacific region. Neither of these was in the interests of U.S. strategy. When the Ronald Reagan Administration assumed office, however, the situation changed. Reagan brought with him the Californian team whose members, like himself, had close links with West Coast monopolies. Since 1976 the countries of the Atlantic region—traditionally the United States' biggest trade partners—have accounted for a smaller share of its foreign trade than those of the Pacific region. By 1983 the latter's share had increased to 31 per cent of U.S. foreign trade turnover, whereas the former's had shrunk to as little as 24 per cent. By that time the United States' capital investment in the countries of the Pacific region had reached $80 billion, i.e., more than a third of its total investment abroad.

The keen attention the Reagan Administration has been paying to the Pacific region shows that the U.S. has recovered from the Vietnam syndrome and has again laid claim to the leading role in the region.

How do U.S. strategists visualize the region's future? The undisputed leadership of the United States must above all be ensured. As U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz put it in March 1983, the United States was the only nation in the region to be endowed with both global vision and the wherewithal to implement a global policy.

The military aspect of the U.S. vision of the future of the Pacific is revealed with even greater clarity in statements made by officials who deal directly with the affairs of the region. Addressing a symposium in Honolulu last year,

Richard Armitage, Assistant Secretary of Defence for international security affairs, said that the strategic importance of the Pacific region for the U.S. was evident if only from the fact that it had several security treaties with states in that part of the world. In an interview with the newspaper Asahi Admiral Robert Long, the then commander of the U.S. armed forces in the Pacific, said that, as he saw it, the Pacific region would continue to be the most important area for the U.S. in the 1980s and afterwards. It was absolutely clear, he added, that this was the region where a confrontation with the Soviet Union would be most likely to take place.

The establishment in the Pacific of a closed military-political grouping would not only enable the U.S. to compensate for the loss of SEATO and the sharp weakening of ANZUS, but also to supply the missing link in the chain encircling the U.S.S.R. and its allies. As far as Washington is concerned, the ideal model for a Pacific community is NATO and the European Common Market.

Japan wants to participate at least on a par with the U.S. in Pacific affairs. It is unwilling to be Washington's "deputy in economic matters." However, this can be achieved only within the framework of an economic association which offers the possibility of neutralizing U.S. attempts to subordinate the other partners, and not in a bloc with clearly proclaimed political and particularly military aims. In the latter case Washington could insist on "discipline" from its allies. In an interview with the weekly Shukan Post, Noboru Goto, president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said: The main precondition for the U.S. activities in the Pacific is the building up of its military might in the context of its overall strategy of confrontation with the U.S.S.R. However, all attempts to force such a line on us unilaterally should be thwarted. It would foil the incipient dialogue between Japan and the ASEAN countries, and all the work of our organizations engaged in establishing regional economic cooperation. Japan must not allow the U.S. to assume leadership and play with the idea of Pacific integration as it sees fit.

The opinion of Saburo Okita, former Foreign Minister and an authority on international economics, is also important. "In the United States there are not a few people who advocate the idea of setting up a collective military de-

By no means everybody agrees that the Pacific Ocean ought to be a zone of stability and cooperation.

The Rainbow Warrior was sunk because its passengers intended to protest against the underground nuclear tests on the Mururoa atoll. Two French counterintelligence officers (inset) planted the mine that blew up the ship in a New Zealand port. This was to be a warning to the New Zealand Labour government of David Lange, who advocates the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the South of the Pacific. The West stops at nothing to perpetuate its military presence in this region whose people want lasting peace.

Photo from Time magazine (U.S.A.)

fence system in the Pacific," he told these correspondents. "I favour the preservation of the existing bilateral relations with the U.S. within the framework of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. However, we are opposed to introducing additional elements of confrontation into the Pacific region. Japan would not benefit from this...."

After prolonged discussions it was agreed last year to hold what is known as a Pacific dialogue on the basis of annual conferences of the foreign ministers of the ASEAN countries (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines) with the participation of their counterparts from the U.S., Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The system was promptly described as a prototype intergovernmental structure of the community. But the ASEAN Six pointedly object to the discussion of any topics that might have a dubious political ring.

The basic practical work on designing the future community is being carried out by unofficial organizations: the Conference for Economic Cooperation in the Pacific, the Pacific Basin Economic Council and the Pacific Council for Trade and Development. In particular, the question of potential participants in Pacific cooperation has been a source of discord in these organizations. Washington is making no secret of the fact that it would like at all costs to rule out the participation of the U.S.S.R. and some other Pacific socialist states. However, this has given rise to apprehension among many influential leaders of countries in the region.

Addressing a symposium on problems of regional integration in Kuala Lumpur late in 1984, Yusuf Wanandi, a representative of Indonesia and a member of the standing committee of the Conference for Economic Cooperation in the Pacific, said the participation of the Soviet Union in the work of this organization's working groups would be a positive factor. Zakaria Haji Ahmad, an eminent Malaysian expert on problems of cooperation in the Pacific, supported him, pointing out that if the ASEAN countries and capitalist powers were to be the only participants in the cooperation system, it could result in the "recreation in a new form" of the pro-American ASPAC alliance which disintegrated ingloriously in the 1970s.

V. GOLOVIN
TASS Correspondent

Y. TAVROVSKY
Our Own Correspondent

Tokyo

On the map of Africa, Burkina Faso looks a tiny country. But that is not so. It is larger than Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Switzerland put together

LAND OF DIGNITY

Burkina Faso is a new name on the map. The revolution of August 1983 initiated radical changes in the life of the country French colonialists named Upper Volta. The National Revolutionary Council (NRC), headed by Thomas Sankara, decided to discard the name as it was meaningless to the former colony's peoples and ethnic groups. Volta was a Frenchman. He discovered for Europeans three rivers crossing the country from north to south, and named them the White Volta, the Red Volta and the Black Volta.

The new name is made up of two words taken from the languages of the local peoples—Mossi (the predominant race constituting more than half of the 7,000,000-strong population) and Diula. "Burkina" is Mossi for "dignity," "respect," "honour" and "Faso" is Diula for "motherland." Burkina Faso can be translated into English as "Land of Dignity."

Man-Made Oases

Where there is no water, there is no life. Uttered by a peasant from the northern province of Yatenga, the phrase sounds ominous. A mouthful of water has saved his family from death on many occasions. Yatenga has become a symbol of the calamitous drought which has hit the country. The "dry season" has been dragging on for a decade there. The Sahara sun has turned the once flowering land into an incandescent stone plateau. No one ventures to plough and sow. The water has gone, leaving dried-up river beds behind. Evergreen acacias and baobabs have been reduced to desiccated trunks and buried under mounds of sand blown in by the hot harmattan wind from the Sahara. This is a graphic example of the dead desert smothering life. The desert is pressing further inland at an average rate of four kilometres a year. The effects of the drought are made worse by the short-sighted activity of man. Irrational use of wood for industrial purposes, cutting forest trees down for firewood, the expansion of the sown area by burning out woodlands—all this undermines agriculture in the country.

Thomas Sankara's government has set the nation the task of stopping the onslaught of the Sahara and making the country green. As part of the afforestation campaign, the people of Burkina Faso plant groves of mangoes, acacias and other trees. Twenty thousand trees have been planted in the two years since the August revolution. It has now become a custom there to mark birthdays and weddings by planting trees. But some 10 million trees will have to be grown to stop the desert.

In the capital Ouagadougou tam-tams thundered as people planted saplings for a new grove on an area of a few hundred square metres. Working to the beat of tam-tams is an ancient custom, but volunteering to work without pay has become a custom only since the revolution. Canals are dug, dams built and artificial lakes created on this basis. Last year alone several large man-made lakes appeared, to become the only permanent source of water for irrigation.

Bananas, mangoes, guayavas, papayas and oranges are common in Burkina Faso; local truck-gardeners grow

Halting the onslaught of the desert is a national objective. Above: an experimental sorghum field. Right: planting an orchard.

Photos by Camera Press—TASS and the author

potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers and eggplants. During rainy seasons, herds of zebus, goats and sheep graze on green meadows. Burkina Faso could well be self-sufficient in food, and even export it to the neighbouring countries, as is evidenced by the fairs in Koudougou, the centre of Bulkiemde Province, locally known as the national poultry farm; in Banfora, the centre of Komoé Province referred to as the national grain basket; and in Orodara, the centre of the fruit-growing Kenedougou Province.

Nevertheless, the colony of Upper Volta was a backward and poor country, with 93 per cent of the population engaged in agriculture. It produced much, but most of its agricultural output was exported.

Moving Forward

After the declaration of independence in 1960, all land and mineral wealth were nationalized. However, it was only after the 1983 revolution that the country was able to get down to progressive reforms. Thanks to the agrarian reform, the land went to those who worked it. The peasants were set the task of stepping up efficiency, chiefly through the use of modern machinery and by promoting regional specialization. The objective now is to make agriculture the base of industrial development.

Radical reforms in the countryside have weakened the positions of big feudal landowners there. The campaign to eradicate the survivals of feudalism has deprived tribal chiefs of the land and power. The traditional chieftains have always supported reactionary elements and kow-towed to the colonialists. They owned the land, collected taxes, administered justice and, after the August revolution, interfered with progressive reforms. Although the revolution has stripped the tribal chiefs of all their privileges, they still retain their influence in a number of places.

Achieving self-sufficiency in food is the key problem. Several projects have been undertaken to solve it.

A dam was put into operation in the Sourou Valley in April 1985. It was built

by a local company in cooperation with a large number of voluntary workers. The construction job took 10 months and cost 600 million francs. Western experts had claimed the dam would cost at least two billion francs and take two years to build. They failed to take into account the working people's enthusiasm and readiness to volunteer to work for their country without pay. The dam will make it possible to build an agricultural complex growing grain on an area of 41,300 hectares to meet 10 per cent of the country's food requirements.

Last summer Thomas Sankara laid the foundation stone of a dam and a hydroelectric station in Kompienga, near the border with Togo and Benin. This project is provided for by the national economic development plan. The construction of the power station (which is to be commissioned in three or four years from now) will mark the first step towards the implementation of the plan for the country's electrification.

Tambao is the future of the country. Manganese ore with a metal content of almost 57 per cent occurs almost right at the surface of its hills which stretch for two kilometres and a half. At an approximate estimate, the area's commercial resources of manganese ore amount to 13-16 million tons. Their development calls for the construction of a railway. It will serve a dual purpose: to develop the mineral-rich north of the country and to keep its drought-stricken population supplied with food.

The ground for the Sahel railway was broken in February 1984. It is to be over 350 km long. Construction is going full blast. People of the most diverse professions are helping to build the railway without pay, realizing that the fruit of their efforts will benefit the whole nation.

Aims of the Revolution

After independence, there arose a situation where a small group of people assumed control of all the housing construction in the country. Working hand in glove with corrupt civil servants, private realtors bought land plots for a song and cashed in on the import of building materials. As a result, most of the housing fell into the hands of the wealthy few, who rented out the overwhelming majority of the buildings.

Many cases of land plot speculation are tried by the people's revolutionary tribunals. Trials are broadcast from courtrooms live, with the entire nation listening in.

Here is how Babou-Polin Bamouni, the well-known Burkina Faso publicist, defined the aims of the people's democratic revolution: "At the first stage of the revolution the country is to deliver itself from poverty, ignorance and exploitation by the imperialist states. At the second stage, we shall apply our energies to carrying out a cultural revolution and providing prerequisites for the construction of socialist society in Burkina Faso. Socialism alone is a truly scientific theory capable of transforming society, eliminating exploitation and making people happy."

Advance along this road encounters fierce resistance on the part of the reactionaries who are bent on reversing the revolutionary process.

Seeking to restructure their society on the principles of social justice, the leaders of Burkina Faso pursue a foreign policy of solidarity with the progressive forces of Africa and the world. "We want to be together with the revolutionaries of other countries, to share their hopes and convictions," Thomas Sankara said, referring to the presence of a Burkina Faso delegation at the 27th CPSU Congress.

S. KONDAKOV
TASS Correspondent,
Exclusive for New Times

Ouagoudougou

NOT THE ECU OF THE MUSKETEERS

FELIX GORYUNOV

The slip of paper I held differed little from an ordinary American Express traveller's cheque except for the unusual currency it was made out in. "A few days ago this specimen of a traveller's cheque was cashed in francs in a Paris branch of our bank," M. Rambure said with a smile. "Had the teller been more observant the owner of the cheque might have been in for some embarrassment. See, it says here: 'No value.' "

The conversation took place in the head office of a leading French bank, Crédit Lyonnais. My interlocutor was Dominique Rambure, a senior executive of the banking house, who had been recommended to me as an authority on the ecu.

To avoid any confusion with the coin in use in France in d'Artagnan's time, it should be pointed out that the traveller's cheque ecus had nothing to do with the gold piece that was put into circulation in the 14th century and was deposed from the French monetary throne at the time of the Great French Revolution. The English abbreviation of the European currency unit just happens to coincide with the designation of the coin now to be found only in the collections of numismatists. But it is not only because the name has a familiar ring to the French ear that the new monetary unit finds favour in France.

For any banker money comes first and emotional reactions second. The important thing for him is not the name, but the reliability, financial prestige of a currency. And evidently it was the prestige of the European currency unit that the sharp operator who cashed the bogus cheque counted on. He struck the right psychological key, for apart from bank officials, the general public even in France does not know very much about the new money.

According to a selective opinion poll conducted by Belgian, French and Italian banks, only one third of the Europeans questioned had even heard of the European currency unit. It was also revealed that the most doubtful view of the innovation was taken in the F.R.G. and Britain, where the ecu "fell heavily on the stony ground of currency chauvinism," as the London Financial Times put it. However, the fact that American Express is issuing ecu-denominated traveller's cheques with which one can pay hotel and restaurant bills and for purchases in shops without changing them into francs is highly indicative. It is one of many signs that business quarters already consider the ecu to be as reliable money as the U.S. dollar, the F.R.G. mark, the British pound sterling, or the Japanese yen. The road of the European currency to this recognition has been a thorny one, literally full of twists and turns.

The Currency Snake Changes Its Skin

When seven years ago New Times carried an article entitled "Will the 'Supersnake' Survive?" there were good reasons for doubt. The European Monetary System founded in March 1979 was faced with the modest but by no means easy task of coordinating the monetary policies of the Common Market countries. It was not easy because the EEC national currencies were in effect hostages to the American dollar. The sad experience of the seventies, in the course of which the Common Market ruling quarters hoped to turn the EEC from what was essentially only a customs union into an economic and monetary alliance, showed that this was impossible without financial stability. The first attempt to achieve at least minimal stability was the introduction in 1972 of the "currency snake," as financial observers called the mechanism of joint exchange rate fluctuations.

Why a "snake"? Because of the outward similarity. With the refusal of the U.S. in the early seventies to guarantee the stability of the exchange rate of the dollar, the official international reserve currency which was the yardstick for all capitalist currencies, their exchange rates began fluctuating, at times sharply. A diagram of these fluctuations, say, for a year, would present configurations reminiscent of snakes. Since this could not be avoided, the Common Market policy makers decided to make the currencies float in unison. But the multi-headed "currency snake" did not ensure financial stability in the Common Market. Moreover, it turned out to be a costly proposition.

The main battering ram the U.S. used in the seventies to break open the doors to export markets to American goods was depreciating dollar rates. For the lower the exchange rate of a country's currency, the cheaper its export output in relation to the goods of competitors. To protect their industrialists from such competition, the monetary authorities of the EEC countries had to buy depreciating dollars at currency exchanges.

The West European "integrators" realized that the "currency snake" as it was could not ensure financial stability primarily because it preserved the dependence of the Common Market on the dollar. This brought into being the European Monetary System, or the "supersnake," as it was called by analogy with its predecessor. It differed from the previous system of joint float mainly in that the yardstick of the fluctuations was the European currency unit instead of the dollar.

What is the European currency unit? Financiers sometimes call it the "currency cocktail," inasmuch as this artificial money is a mixture of the exchange rates of the West European currencies in proportions corresponding to the various countries' share in the overall domestic product and foreign trade of the Common Market (see table). Thus the exchange rate of the European currency unit is determined by the strength or weakness not of one but of several national currencies, which makes it relatively stable.

The new money was not built on sand. Beginning with 1979 it came to be backed by the European Monetary Cooperation Fund to which the participating countries contributed 20 per cent of their gold and foreign exchange reserves. The European currency units a country is entitled to depend on its contribution. (By the end of 1985 the fund

had released some 50 billion units into circulation.) Thus, besides serving as the yardstick for measuring rates of exchange and for settling accounts between central banks, the European currency unit has acquired the standing of a currency reserve in the Common Market. (From March 1985 this regional money was made available also to non-member countries for use as a currency reserve.) The joint budget of the community is drawn up, standard prices for agricultural products are set and the regional projects of the European Investment Bank financed in ecus.

Although the West European "currency cocktail" takes in all the national currencies of the Common Market countries (those of Spain and Portugal are to be added in 1989), the monetary integration is not proceeding as smoothly as its proponents would wish. Britain is not taking part in the system and Greece too is still hesitating. The German Federal Bank still regards the ecu merely as a unit of account in payments between EEC member states and does not recognize it as a foreign currency, fearing that this would impinge on the prestige of the mark. For this reason West German commercial banks are barred from carrying out ecu transactions, though they can buy foreign-issued ecu funds. On the other hand, London banks readily engage in ecu transactions even though the legal status of the unit has not yet been defined in Britain.

The Long-Range Objective

Although it had become the official unit in the settling of international accounts in the Common Market, the ecu by no means at once asserted itself in the main sphere of capitalist endeavour —that of making money. While the "official ecu" was widely used, the "private ecu" did not find favour among the West European industrialists and bankers until comparatively recently. It is only in the past two years that the ecu assets of commercial banks quadrupled and the unit became the third most important currency on the security market. In the period from 1981 to April 1985 the Paris Crédit Lyonnais, for example, carried out 216 financial transactions in the new currency to the sum of 10.6 billion ecus ($7.9 billion).

"In 1985," M. Rambure said, "the ecu commercial credit market for the first time reached the volume of Eurocredits in F.R.G. marks. Wider use of the European currency unit in credit operations will be greatly facilitated by the activity of the Ecu Banking Association founded in September 1985 of which I am chairman. So far it takes in 19 banks, but at least another 50 want to join. The Basel-based Bank for International Settlements* has already agreed to start clearing ecu accounts between commercial banks belonging to the association."

"The ecu then is becoming a universally recognized international currency. But will it be able to perform this role?"

"Yes," N. Rambure said. "I believe the ecu could well become an international medium in settling currency accounts. In the present situation this is most important inasmuch as the dollar is no longer able fully to perform its former role as the sole international currency. The ecu may become a monetary base for West European political independence."

"In what respects do you consider the ecu stronger than the dollar?"

"In the first place, the ecu is more closely connected with trade turnover than the dollar and is not a currency to make a liquid profit. Secondly, the ecu rate structure is more stable, taking in, as it does, the currencies of a number of countries. Besides which the ecu is linked with gold more than the dollar is."

DAILY FOREIGN EXCHANGE TURNOVER OF THE LEADING CAPITALIST FINANCIAL CENTRES (in billion of dollars)

	1979	1984
London	25	49
New York	17	35
Zurich	10	20
Frankfort on the Main	11	17
Tokyo	2	8
Singapore	3	8
Hongkong	3	8
Paris	4	5
Total	75	150

According to data of the Group of 30, a research organization established by leading transnational corporations and banks.

* The Bank for International Settlements, founded in Basel, Switzerland, in 1930, is an international financial organization taking in the central banks of the West European countries, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and South Africa. It buys, sells and holds on deposit the gold of central banks, borrows from them and grants them loans in foreign currency and securities, and guarantees major international loans. Since 1973 it has been the financial agent of the European Monetary Cooperation Fund. Since February 1986 it has become a clearing house for commercial banks operating in ecus.

As befits a banker, M. Rambure takes a sober view of the international currency situation. As far as I could see, he is far from exaggerating the present international role of the European currency unit. Dollar transactions cover about two thirds of the world's capitalist turnover of goods and services. It occupies a still bigger place in the international credit market. At the same time the volume of commercial transactions in ecus still falls short of the dimensions of trade and financial operations even among the Common Market countries. Thus, while optimistically assessing the outlook for the ecu as a new international currency, Paris bankers see it rather as a longer-term proposition.

Such a long-term policy could hold out promise. After all, for overall volume of bank assets the West European financial centre is practically the equivalent of the American and Japanese taken together. By combining fragmented financial strength in a European currency, West European Big Business could substantially increase its monetary weight in the capitalist world balance. In the meantime, the European currency unit is called upon to offset the negative consequences for integration of the selfish foreign economic policy of the White House. The aggravation of the dollar crisis caused by this policy is what has helped the "supersnake" not only to survive but to strengthen the monetary positions of the Common Market.

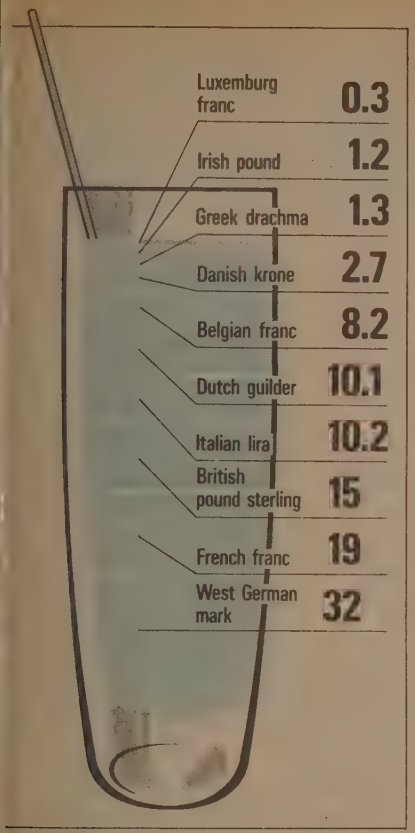
Robbery of the Century

The behaviour of currencies is as unpredictable, broadly speaking, as that of people. A financier can tell whether a currency will go up or down next week with just about the same degree of accuracy as he can foresee that he will not break his leg on a slippery pavement this week. Like people, currencies depend on big politics—the politics of the West which are determined by the long-term interests of monopoly capital. And these in turn are dictated not so much by the political ambitions of governments as by the economic realities.

Such a reality for the U.S. ruling circles in the year the European Monetary System was established was the "serious erosion of U.S. hegemony" which the Big Business mouthpiece Business Week associated with a sharp worsening of the United States' trade and currency positions. Realizing that the continued weakening of the dollar would completely undermine that hegemony, the U.S. decided to make an about-turn. At the end of 1979 Washington shifted the emphasis away from the "cheap dollar" and proceeded to jack up its exchange rate by artificially raising bank credit rates.

THE WEST EUROPEAN "CURRENCY COCKTAIL"

Share of national currencies in the ecu (per cent)



From the standpoint of the consequences for world capitalism, this monetary and credit policy could well be called the "robbery of the century." From the beginning of 1980 to February 1985 the rate of the dollar in relation to the currencies of its main trade partners rose by 53 per cent. As a result, U.S. imports (their annual value exceeds $300 billion) cost the Americans less than at the former exchange rate correlation, which enabled the U.S. to stem the tide of inflation in its economy at the expense of others. High bank credit rates attracted to the U.S. in this period capital running to at least half a trillion dollars. It is also obvious that without the mass inflow of foreign capital the Reagan Administration could not finance its enormous "rearmament" programmes. The spiralling dollar bank credit rate became also the main reason for the sharp increase in the indebtedness of the developing countries and retarded economic growth in the periphery of the capitalist world.

The inflow of foreign capital also swelled the United States' own external debt. According to American Express experts, the United States' debt (excluding all direct private investment abroad and official foreign exchange reserves) amounted to $400 billion by the end of 1985 and exceeded roughly by one quarter America's exports of goods and services. Having made the United States the biggest world debtor, the "strong dollar" strategists gave little thought for a time to what could happen to it. "You have a problem only when you owe a debt in a foreign currency," Alan Greenspan, former chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, said. "Most of the U.S. debt is in dollars." In other words, the U.S. abused its "exorbitant privilege," as Charles de Gaulle once qualified the special role of the dollar in the capitalist monetary system. The dollar itself was set to work to save its hegemony, and this enabled the White House to strike a pose of "benign neglect," for which it was repeatedly rebuked by its Atlantic allies.

On the Pinnacle of Debt Mountain

Thus it was until the United States' addiction to shots of foreign capital reached the critical point. The alarm was sounded in the beginning of last year when it became obvious that the "strong dollar" and the annual injections of foreign capital had made the U.S. economy so dependent on the caprices of the world economic situation that a slump could bring the country to the brink of bankruptcy. "The stability of our capital and money markets is now dependent as never before on the willingness of foreigners to continue to place growing amounts of money in our markets," Paul A. Volcker, chairman of the Federal Reserve System, said in February last year. Noting that in 1984 one quarter of the capital needed by America came from abroad, he voiced apprehension that the time might come when foreign investments would be withdrawn.

There was good reason for these apprehensions. A country with a financial system burdened with a $200 billion budget deficit and a $2 trillion federal debt, with a $150 billion gap between imports and exports and the biggest foreign debt in the world, could hardly be attractive to foreign moneybags. The day is not far off, the Financial Times predicted, when investors will suddenly discover that the dollar is "tottering on the pinnacle of a debt mountain with nowhere to go but down." And then "the bubble will burst."

The dollar bubble may burst also for another reason. The currency hegemon of capitalism is increasingly losing touch with the turnover in commodities. Although in the epoch of imperialism commodity production is still considered the basis of the economy as a whole, Lenin observed 70 years ago, in reality it has been undermined by the "'geniuses' of financial manipulation." Here are a few figures illustrating the present scale of this process. The turnover of goods and services in world capitalist trade is worth about $2 trillion annually and financial flows, anywhere between $20 to $50 trillion. According to estimates made by one West European bank under 5 per cent of all international currency deals bear any relationship to trade or long-term capital flows. And these deals have reached astronomical dimensions: they have soared to $150 billion a day (see table).

Dollar-based speculative funds reap average returns of 28 per cent annually. Such parasitic earnings are comparable only with the profits pocketed by the stockholders of the leading corporations of the military-industrial complex. Only a financial crash, one British economist has observed, will ease the burden of rentier claims which bar a revival of trade, investment and production. "The devaluation of those claims," he says, "is a necessary, if insufficient condition for the quickening of real economic activity and perhaps even the survival of the capitalist system."

"Prudent" Obstacles

It is understandable that in a situation when the trade and economic ground is slipping from under the dollar, businessmen who do not want to take unnecessary risks see a more reliable currency in the European currency unit. Even American transnationals have in recent years been financing their commercial deals abroad in ecus. In 1985 the Indian government allowed its exporters to use the unit in settlement of payments. Part of the external debts of Latin American countries has been transferred from dollars to ecus. But what perhaps has played an even bigger part in the recognition of the ecu as an international commercial medium of payment has been its use in financing East-West transactions. In this the ecu has also been helped by the "strong dollar," or, to be more exact, Washington's anti-Soviet monetary and credit policy.

The transatlantic hawks have long been using credit obstacles to create barriers to mutually advantageous trade with the Soviet Union. Recall if only the 1974 Trade Act which prohibited federal credits to finance U.S. export to the U.S.S.R. When the Reagan Administration took over, it extended such restrictions to East-West trade in general.

To the accompaniment of a propaganda clamour about the "dangerous foreign indebtedness" of the CMEA countries, official Washington and, at its prompting, the U.S. banks began in 1982 to curtail credit relations with the U.S.S.R.

and other CMEA countries. Simultaneously with attempts to frustrate the construction of the Siberian gas pipeline, the White House tried to knock together a "credit COCOM"—to set up within the NATO framework a mechanism of control over the financing of East-West trade.* However, Washington did not succeed either in preventing West European countries from participating in the construction of the pipeline or in setting up a "credit COCOM." The conference of the capitalist Big Seven held in Versailles in June 1982 merely spoke of the need "for commercial prudence in limiting export credits." And the interpretation of this by the leading Western countries varied.

The commercial and credit "prudence" boiled down to a number of Western countries adhering to the 1978 agreement on the basic terms of export credits known as the "credit consensus." It provides for "regulating" (primarily raising) interest rates on export credits with a view to preventing "dishonest competition." Inasmuch as Washington had pursued a policy of expensive credit from the beginning of the eighties this "consensus" was advantageous for the U.S. and encroached on the commercial interests of its competitors. Some West European governments did not risk earning Washington's displeasure by offering their CMEA partners competitive export credit terms. When during a conversation I had in the former French Ministry of Restructuring of Industry and Foreign Trade the question came up of the French industrialists not having been able to offer Soviet importers acceptable export credit terms, I was told: "This is a foreign policy problem. I advise you to discuss it at the Quai d'Orsay [Ministry of Foreign Affairs]."

French exporters had to pay dearly for their political kow-towing to Washington. Owing to the absence of an agreement on financing the export of industrial equipment to the U.S.S.R. they lost orders running to about 1.5 billion rubles in the period from 1982 to 1985. The contracts French firms missed went to their competitors in the F.R.G., Italy and Japan, who offered terms more attractive to Soviet foreign trade organizations.

Friendly and mutually beneficial ties with France have always been accorded priority in Soviet foreign policy. This was confirmed also during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to France in October 1985. To prevent a substantial decline in commercial cooperation because of unfavourable credit terms, Moscow has in recent years actually paid for imports from France in cash, though such a financial base is rarely used in large-scale trade deals. This was done in the case of the contracts for the supply of French equipment for the first and second sections of the Astrakhan gas condensate complex, the West Kazakhstan oil field, and other projects. The terms of the long-term Siberian gas contract were revised in France's favour in order to balance trade between our two countries. Finally, at the April 1985 session of the Soviet-French Big Commission, Soviet foreign trade organizations agreed to the proposal of the French industrialists and bankers to credit bilateral deals in ecus. The commission also delineated the contours of an intergovernmental agreement on the use of ecus in settling trade accounts.

Convergence Washington Style

In the opinion of Claude Jouven, president of Crédit Commercial de France, the new European currency unit should become, some technical complexities notwithstanding, the predominant means of accounting in Franco-Soviet commercial cooperation. French businessmen consider it more suitable for financing East-West trade than the national currencies of the Common Market countries since the ecu interest rates depend on the current situation on the international credit markets and not on Washington's politicized "consensus" terms.

This view is held not only in Paris. The ecu is already used in crediting trade between the U.S.S.R. and Italy. An agreement to use it has been concluded between the Vneshtorgbank (Soviet Foreign Trade Bank) and Sweden. And since last year ecus have been used in transactions between the International Bank for Economic Cooperation and the CMEA International Investment Bank.

What makes the use of the ecu in foreign exchange transactions attractive to the Common Market countries' Eastern partners? The same considerations as those that appeal to the industrialists and bankers of these countries. The European currency unit is linked closer than the dollar to international trade and has a more reliable commodity, including gold, backing. Its exchange rate is more stable than that of any Western national currency. Another advantage the bankers see in the ecu is its universality: credits in ecus can be extended by practically every bank with holdings of the currencies that go into the "currency cocktail."

Nevertheless, it is still too early to say that the ecu will soon become the leading currency in crediting West European exports to the CMEA countries. East-West currency and credit relations have on repeated occasions been made the target of political intrigues by the opponents of all-European cooperation. So long as these relations are not regulated by bilateral (and perhaps multilateral) financial agreements, the role of the ecu in the Common Market countries' Eastern trade will be limited. And this in turn could affect the volume of that trade.

Moreover, Washington has been changing its currency and credit policy in recent months. To bring down the exchange rate of the dollar, the top men of the Federal Reserve System have been gradually scaling down the bank rate. If formerly the White House rejected out of hand all proposals for a reform of the monetary system (one such proposal was made by President Mitterrand of France in 1982), now it advocates the holding of a conference on monetary problems. Citing high-ranking Administration officials, the New York Times says the U.S. would have it discuss "the larger political system in which the monetary system must function." There is also talk in Washington about the "convergence" of the economic policy of the leading Western countries.

Judging by everything, the Washington linkage of monetary and political problems is not a matter of chance. The American strategists are clearly out to replace the objective economic, trade and financial interdependence of the nations in a changing world with a political "convergence" of Western economies that would perpetuate their dependence on the empire of the dollar. Although the monetary hegemony of the U.S. has been seriously undermined economically, politically the Common Market countries are still tied to it. The heightening of the role of the European currency unit in the international financial arena could loosen the grip of the dollar. However, in view of the convergence Washington style now being pressed upon the West Europeans, the growing prestige of the ecu hardly offers them a substitute for a more constructive approach to foreign and trade and economic policy issues.

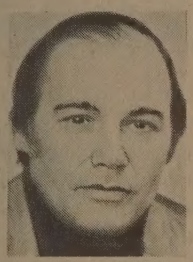
■

* See "Credits and Politics," New Times No. 20, 1982.

TAKING UP A POINT

"Some time ago I saw the 'citizens' summit' between Seattle and Leningrad. I fully support such direct communication between Americans and Russians, for it furthers understanding about what we have in common and our differences. For example, when I saw how openly critical our audience was of our government and how yours carefully avoided any such criticism, I was once again struck by one of our main differences—the freedoms we in the U.S.A. enjoy and their absence in the U.S.S.R. Honestly, now, don't you agree!"

Robert RAITT
U.S.A.



VLADIMIR POZNER, the radio and TV commentator who moderated the TV programme mentioned by Mr Raitt, replies:

No, honestly, I disagree, and I will tell you why. But I should like to begin by pointing out that the audiences in Seattle and Leningrad were chosen on the same basis: they were average citizens who, from the point of view of their occupations, living standards and ages represented the majority. In other words, they were **typical** people, who expressed the most widespread views. Knowing this, one could have drawn a very different conclusion from the programme, namely, that there are quite a few typical Americans who are not happy with the policy pursued by their government and that there are no such typical Soviet citizens. You may find my conclusion strange but, honestly, is its logic worse than yours? This logic is neither better nor worse—it is **different**, just as our approach to the problem of freedom, and our concept of freedom itself is different. And this is what I would like to discuss with you.

So what is freedom? A famous British philosopher, John Stuart Mill, once said: "Liberty consists in doing what one desires." We could argue endlessly and without result as to whether this liberty, or freedom, is good or not. But let us agree on one thing: this freedom is based on the preeminence of the **desires** of the individual and it is this freedom that is held up to the exclusion of everything else in the United States and in the West in general.

But there is a different approach. In the last century Marxist philosophers defined freedom as necessity understood. Just think: this formula implies that a truly free person is a thinking person, a person who bases his or her actions **not on desires** but on what he or she thinks **necessary.** From this point of view, anyone following only his or her desires is a slave of his or her passions and is therefore not free. Conversely, a free person always makes a conscious choice based on necessity.

Here is an example from neither your country nor mine.

When the nazis overran France during the second world war, a French underground fighter was seized and put in solitary confinement in a Gestapo gaol. His guard asked him: "Why have they put you here?"

"Because I am a free man," he answered.

"How come? You will rot in your cell but I will soon return to the barracks. I am free but you are not," the guard said.

"No, you don't understand," the prisoner replied. "When you invaded my country, I could have got by without risking my life. I could have sat at home. But then I would not have been free. As a free man, it was my duty to fight you. Of course, I wanted and still want to live rather than die but **as a free man,** I had no choice."

This is an example of freedom as necessity understood. And this is our ideal of freedom. This interpretation guarantees **responsibility** towards oneself and therefore towards others, towards society. No one is ensured against mistakes, but, honestly, don't you agree that people would live better in this world if they understood their freedom as responsibility?

Now let me take another example, from life in our own countries.

The other day Soviet TV showed a film marking the centenary of the clash between workers and police in Haymarket in Chicago on May 1, 1886. It was a film about America past and present. A sequence from a programme devoted to professional wrestling and shown nationwide by NBC was included in the film. It showed two wrestlers. One was a blond giant in a white jersey, nicknamed The Hulk, with the Stars and Stripes flying in his corner. The other was a brute of a man in a red jersey, "Nikolai Ivanov," with the Soviet flag in his corner. Egged on by the crowd, the blond American crushed the "Russian," tore the Soviet flag from its pole, crumpled it, spat on it, wiped his shoes with it, spat on it again, threw it to the floor and stamped on it.

What has all this to do with freedom? A good deal. Nothing of the kind could be shown on Soviet TV because such things **are banned.** They are banned because such "shows" breed hatred, pander to the basest sentiments, encourage chauvinism and play upon fears and prejudices. They are essentially **irresponsible.**

You in America would say that such a ban is an infringement on freedom. You would be right—but with one reservation: an infringement on freedom as you understand it. In this case, the freedom to entertain and to be entertained as one "desires." As for the consequences—sorry, it is not our business, not our headache.

You are right, of course, that there are many differences between us. You are also right when you say that direct communication between us furthers understanding about what we have in common and our differences. This is very important. No one says that we should agree on everything. This in fact is hardly possible. But we must understand each other—only then can we make a free, conscious choice. ■

POSTSCRIPT

Leakage Row

Another row over a leak of "top-secret" information has erupted in Washington. The information reveals that the White House gave the green light to the Pentagon and the CIA to supply counterrevolutionary gangs in Angola and Afghanistan with such advanced U.S. weaponry as the Stinger anti-aircraft missile. The Reagan Administration is determined to punish the culprit and has even instituted a special inquiry to identify him. The inquiry, however, would seem to be unnecessary, as the media have been quick to disclose their source: an official close to the President deliberately inspired the leak.

Meaningful Coincidence

"The War Against Children—South Africa's Youngest Victims." A report under this title, prepared by a group of U.S. lawyers advocating human rights, cites plentiful evidence to show that young South Africans at protest demonstrations have been killed by so-called guardians of law and order. The report also publishes information about the now daily use of electric shocks by the police in torturing children. Curiously enough, the publication coincided exactly with President Botha's renewed protestations of democratic intent, within the context of apartheid.

Not Their Business

In a U.S. opinion poll conducted by the New York Times and CBS TV on the Administration's aid to Nicaraguan contras, 62 per cent of those interviewed opposed the White House request to Congress for $100 million for the counterrevolutionaries, while 12 per cent said they had no opinion. But to judge from the pressure the White House is putting on Congressmen, it does not care what most Americans think. American foreign policy is not the public's business.

Rising Star

Yokote, a member of the Japanese parliament's lower chamber, is seen as a rising star in the Democratic Socialist Party, says its General Secretary Ouchi. An NHK TV report shows how far he may go. On April 16 the police searched his study and flat in the official residence for MPs and confiscated a wealth of documentary evidence that could trigger off another political corruption scandal. Businessmen, it appears, paid Yokote several million yen for urging parliament to grant them large government subsidies.

Blasphemy

West German schoolchildren have recently been presented with a new board game. On it are six squares, named after the concentration camps Mauthausen, Auschwitz, Maidanek, Dachau, Buchenwald and Treblinka, where the nazis are known to have annihilated more than 6.5 million people. The first player to reach the central square, the gas chamber, is the winner.

Now They Know

By making public the texts of the F.R.G.-U.S. agreements concerning the involvement of West German firms in U.S. "star wars," the Cologne newspaper Express has now shown why these agreements had been so thoroughly concealed from the public in the F.R.G. "All suspicions and apprehensions have been proved," the Munich Abendzeitung commented. "The Americans have won.... These agreements give them complete freedom to sponge on us.... They rob us of the billions we could otherwise earn by trading with Eastern Europe." Other newspapers have noted that the Americans can now delay West German exports of technology and commodities to the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries.

Passengers, Beware!

Britons are finding it increasingly dangerous to travel by public transport. According to the London Daily Express, in 1985 some 1,000 passengers, or 10 per cent more than in the previous year, were mugged or assaulted on the railways. During that same period 1,515 passengers, or a further 18 per cent, and some 400 service personnel, or another 25 per cent, were similarly mugged or assaulted in the London Tube.

Warders Worried

San Marino's one and only gaol is now empty, as Fabio de Angelis, 21, its only inmate, has escaped, Reuters reports. The warders are said to be worried not so much by the escape as by the unpleasant prospect of being made redundant.

Drawings
by V. Chakiridis

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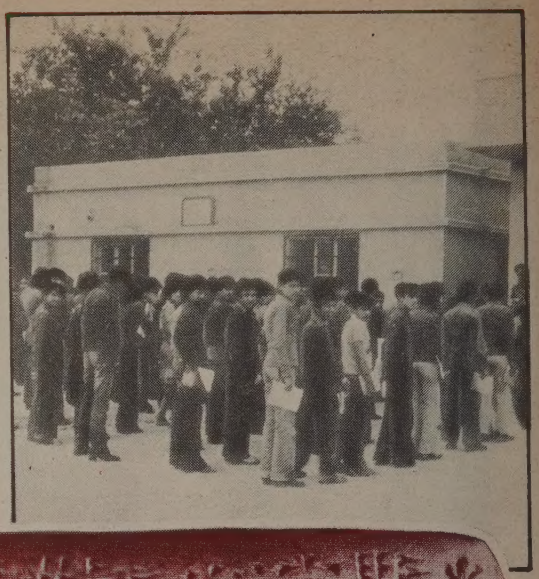
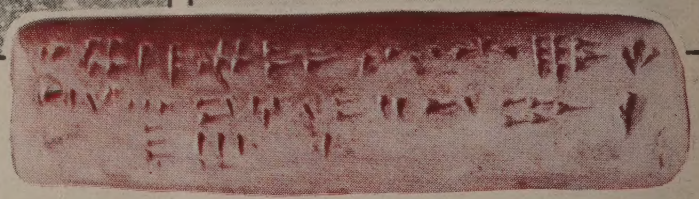




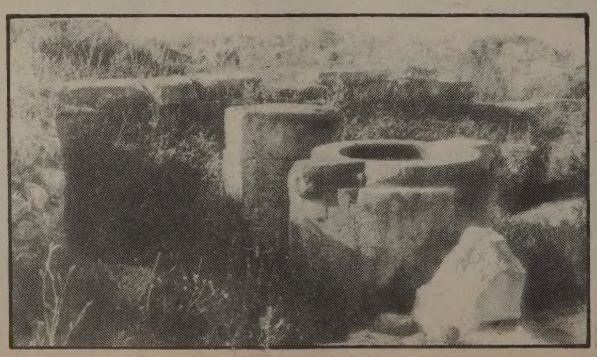
Entrance to the ancient palace. ● The school in Ras Shamra Village stands opposite the palace of the Ugarit kings. In Syria, which takes pride in its educational achievements, such coexistence side by side of the old and the new seems symbolic. ● A copy of a tablet with Ugaritic script.

ANCIENT UGARIT

Ugarit. This Phoenician city-state occupies an outstanding place in the history of human civilization. And so being in Latakia on one of my trips to northern Syria, I made a point of going to see it. I arrived in Latakia at night and the first rays of dawn found me in Ras Shamra, the tiny village in the vicinity of which the priceless treasures of this ancient city lay buried for more than 2,000 years.

With veneration I descended into the shallow excavation dug half a century ago by French archeologists, exposing a large section of a wall built of hewn stones neatly fitted one into the other. I made my way through prickly bushes and wild flowers to an almost triangular-shaped door in the solid wall. Crossing the stone threshold, I found myself at the bottom of a staircase that led directly to the ruins of the huge palace of the Ugarit kings. And at once I was enveloped by silence, the silence of thousands of years as if I had gone through some magic door into infathomable vastness of the distant past. There stood the socles of the stone columns before the entrance to the great hall and the broad low steps over which the kings could drive in on their chariots. And here was the reception room with stone benches for visitors awaiting an audience with the high officials or with the monarch himself. The guard rooms, and beyond, the archive-library where the archeologists found thousands of clay tablets—political and financial documents, records of myths and legends, religious and ritual texts. It was a veritable treasure trove that, after the Ugaritic alphabet had been deciphered in 1930, the French scholars Edouard Paul Dhorme and Charles Virolleaud and the German scholar Hans Bauer had discovered for mankind.

The excavations showed that people had dwelt in Ugarit five or six thousand years before our era, i.e., during the neolithic period. Between the 24th and 23rd centuries B.C. the city was destroyed by a fearful earthquake. The disaster was repeated in about 1365 B.C., and the king of Tyre, another Phoenician city, wrote to the pharaoh of Egypt "Ugarit, the city of the king, has been destroyed by fire, one half of the city has been burned, the other half no longer exists." But the most terrible blow struck Ugarit in about 1200 B.C., when some mysterious "sea people" suddenly attacked it, took it by storm, pillaged and destroyed it. Since then Ugarit, the famous Mediterranean centre, a city-state that had prospered for thousands of years, gradually began to fade from the annals of history until at last it disappeared altogether in the mists of time. It was only in March 1928 that a local peasant chanced upon a carefully-hewn stone and, turning it over, discovered a cave filled with clay vessels. That is how ancient Ugarit was restored to mankind.



Ancient stone vessel.

It is believed that the Ugaritic script is the precursor of the Greek and Latin alphabets. It has 30 cuneiform signs and came into being at the end of the second millennium B.C., at the time when Egyptian hieroglyphs were used. By devising a simple phonetic alphabet the people of Ugarit inscribed an important page in the history of human civilization. Thus it was not the riches and enterprise, nor the diplomatic cunning and practical sense of the Ugarit monarchs but the simple clay tablets with cuneiform signs that have immortalized the name of the ancient Phoenician city-state.

E. KORSHUNOV

Photos by author